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Back cover, The Tower of Babel, by **Sam McLean**

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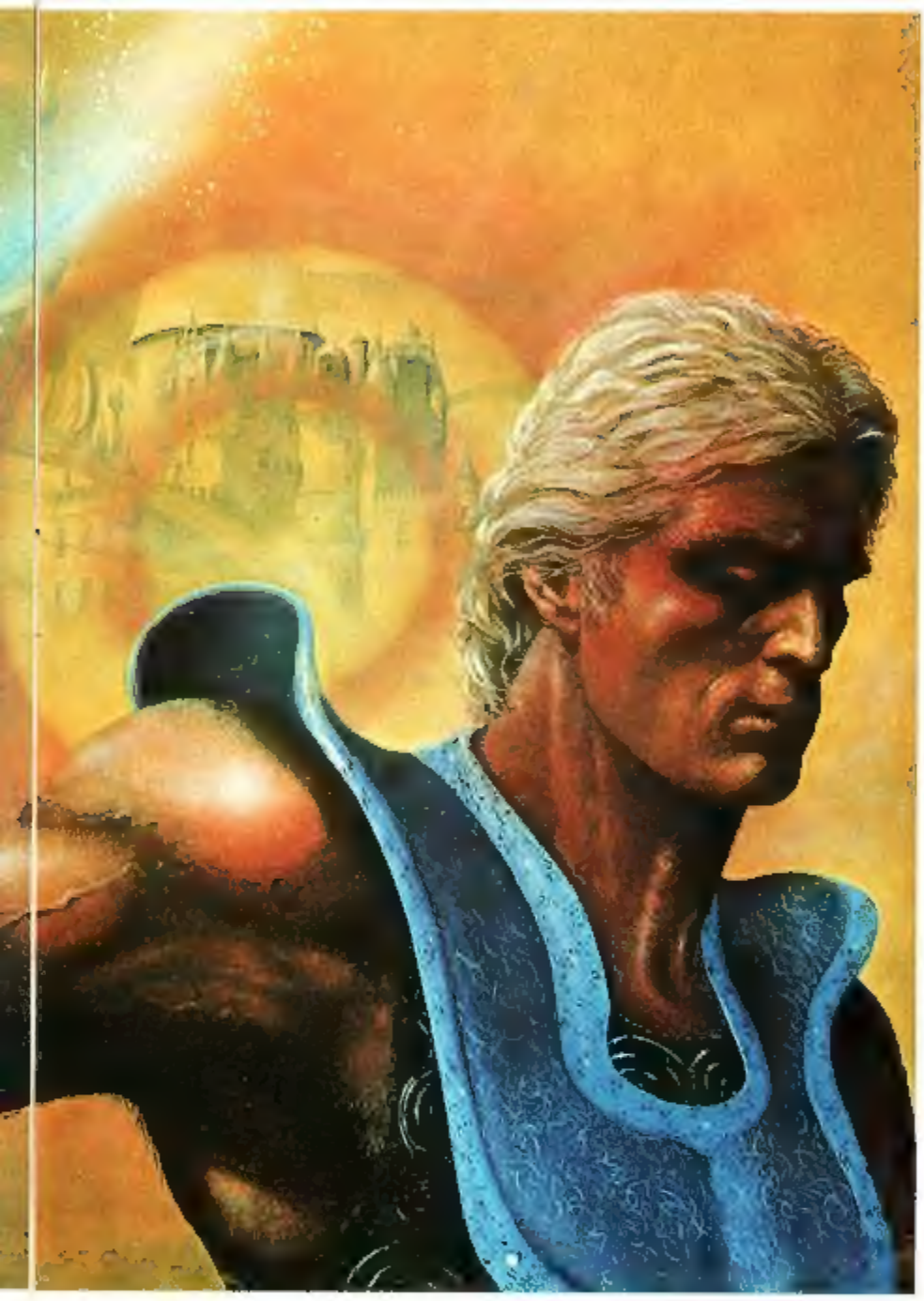

...THIRTY-SIX...

He slouched into our offices in a strange disarray: a lab coat spattered with blood—we didn't inquire about its origins—over his untucked shirt, his lower face hidden by a stubble which he assured us he kept trimmed to that length. Under his arm he carried a massive package: his book.

The book was called *Changes*. It had been scheduled for publication by Philadelphia's Running Press and they had printed up the cover before crying chicken and backing out of the deal.

He laid out his pages. "Maybe there's something here you can use," he mumbled, collapsing into a chair.

There were seventy-seven pages, and at first glance they were a ragtag bunch: some pages had photos; others made use of a variety of art styles. The "stories" occupied as little as one or two pages, rarely more than four or five. What *was* this stuff, anyway?

But then we started to read them, and very quickly we were caught up in a mad universe whose underpinnings were fluid, but whose theme was timeless: revenge and its consequences. Outside our office windows, day shaded into night. We remained transfixed, caught up in the story about the Post brothers and what happened to them after they'd executed M. Boche's commission.

Finally we were finished; all seventy-seven pages were read. *Changes* was not what it had at first appeared; it was a remarkably coherent story.

"Well?" he said, rousing himself from his stupor.

"This is...," words failed. "This...."

He shrugged. "That's okay," he said, disappointment thick in his voice. He started gathering the pages up from the desk top.

"This is great stuff!"

He dropped the pages again in surprise. "Hey, really? You mean it?"

We did. You'll find the first installment on page 67 of this issue.

continued on page 4

Ted White

Julie Simmons

Susan Zimmer

John Workman

Bill Workman, Dan Steffan

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Laurie Drummond

George S. Agoglia, Sr.

Diana K. Bletter

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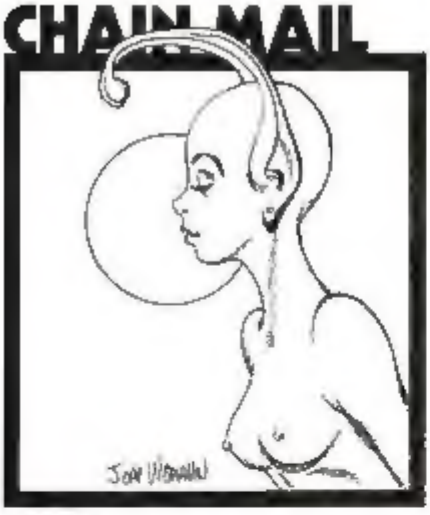
...THIRTY-SIX...

continued from page 3

What you won't find in this issue, despite our promise last issue, is the first thirty-three pages of "Champakou." What we thought was a sixty-four page story (as it was when it appeared in our French sister magazine, *Metal Hurlant*) turns out to be even longer and even better. Next issue—for sure!—"Champakou" will make its debut here at last. We hope. —*TW*

CHAIN MAIL



Dear *HM*:

So, old man Ellison is still playing Public Doomcrier, eh? Only now he sugars his usual apocalyptic lambaste with nostalgic reveries of Those Fabulous Sixties, when Things Were Happening and People Cared and times were sweet for all concerned, especially self-appointed angry young men of science fiction like the Cordwainer Bird. Come on, clowns! Anyone who's read the *Strange Wine* collection knows that Harlan Ellison ain't what he used to be, that he's let us down more than Bob Dylan *ever* could, and that the erstwhile prophet of destruction now sounds (if his new intro to "Santa Claus vs. S.P.I.D.E.R." is any indication) like a peevish old fart.

Patrick Perry
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Dearest *Heavy Metal*:

I find it hard to believe that Harlan Ellison has heard the same new Bob Dylan album that I have.

Marshall Pipkin
Caruthers, Ca.

Dear Chain Mail:

It was a rare pleasure to see two pages of material by Steve Stiles, "one of Arlington's (formerly Baltimore's) top cartoonists." Stiles deserves every bit of exposure that *HM* can give him. His talents have gone virtually unnoticed except for the small, hard core of true believers — but soon everyone will realize what a fine artist he is. By the way, Steve — how about that fifteen bucks you owe me?

Mitch Hellman
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Ted:

Nice to see you again.

Picked up the January issue of *Heavy Metal* and found not much disparity between the old and the new, save for a heavier accent on text pieces. I thought to myself, "Oh Lord, please don't let Ted White turn this into some *Starlog*-type bullshit!"

Well, you redeemed your new editorial moves, destroying the cache of polemics I was ready to use. The articles were good. But let's discuss the rest first.

As usual, the comics stories were dumb, trite, and vapid. *Heavy Metal* is big on graphics and they're nice. But the stories!

Continued on page 6

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(Illustration)

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continued from page 4

Here's a general rundown (believe me, most of these stories *were* run-down):

"Rowlf" by Rich Corben. Excellent; the best thing this issue. Still like the black-and-white version better.

"Time Out III: The Pause That Refreshes" — Mayerik's best art to date, mercifully free of nauseating gray tones. But the story was just uninvolving metaphysical scum. Can't writers work these days unless they're on something?

"Womb with a View" — more dumb fantasy. The old all-in-a-dream syndrome; regurgitated, not refreshing.

"Exit/In" — a smashing blow for women's lib. Rapist after you? Jump into the dimension interface portal and emerge Jinel of Jory, broadsword ready to hack off the offending member. Nice art, though.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* as interpreted by the wonderful brush of Terrance Lindall was a thorough joy. I've been enjoying this artist's refreshingly unique work on the cover of Warren mags for the past few months. That penultimate panel was a masterpiece.

I'll skip the next three pieces. Didn't interest me at all. "Food for the Children" by Arthur Suydam is the kind of reprehensible shock ending EC-type story we don't need anymore. Moreover, the narrative was confusing and misleading. The supposedly shocking climax left a bad taste in my mouth. To top it off, the art wasn't even that good. Cut-rate Berni Wrightson. Sorry, Suydam.

"Alien Comix" and "Shoot-Out at the Fantasy Factory" can be summed up together as being both nicely drawn but insanely scribed.

Paul Kirchner's two bus comics were excellent. Crisp drawings that really depict city life well. Pleasant vignettes; not too harsh on the brain. Conversely, "Hive" was an exercise in stultifying boredom, even if the art was excellent.

Despite the usual bad quality of the comics, the articles made this issue worth purchasing. The Stephen King interview was entertaining. Even better was the comix section by Jay Kinney. However, I must say the two music articles were the best. Lou Stathis's piece was well-written and insightful; parsecs away from the masturbatory *Creem*-type criticism. Steve Brown's book reviews were almost like music themselves. Perhaps Brown isn't the first to correlate SF with popular music, but he did it well. The writing was concise, really well done. Brown really gets into his work. He doesn't skim the surface like Spider Robinson and he doesn't bore you to death with droll pomposity like Algis Budrys.

All in all, pretty good for a first outing, Ted, my boy. Keep up the articles (but not too many! *Heavy Metal* should remain primarily a visual experience).

By the way, have you checked out your old magazines lately?

Denny Daley
Chicago, Ill.

SF

Steve Brown

Clever as we think we are, we still live at the beginning of the electronic age. The techniques of mass instantaneous communication, techniques a mere generation old, are just starting to become fully understood. The sophistication of the audience has been growing in step with the abilities of the opinion-molders. The audience is already inured to the psychological assaults of television pitchmen (pitchpeople?). Today the average TV viewer is so "media wise" that commercials—products of skilled psychological manipulators with six-figure budgets—are automatically blanked out of the viewer's attention, forgotten within minutes. It is a rare combination of skills indeed that can hold the attention of the modern viewer for a full thirty seconds.

The campaign of Teddy Kennedy is a perfect example of a state-of-the-art media manipulation. Kennedy began actively shooting for the 1980 nomination about six months into Carter's term. This has been a subtle and subliminal effort that didn't surface to the forefront of America's attention until the latter part of the summer of '79. Doesn't it seem as if you've heard more about Kennedy during those three years than you have in the previous ten? You probably remember being very aware of his existence, but can't quite remember any details. Even the emphasis on Chappaquiddick in the fall of '79 was a master stroke. By consenting to interviews on the subject, and "allowing" an exhaustive media rehash of the event a full year before November 1980, the fangs of Kennedy's most serious political liability have been pulled before any potential opponent has a chance to use it (beyond constantly referring to it as "an issue that will not be raised"). A prevailing attitude is growing: "The poor man has suffered enough during the past ten years. Why won't they leave him alone?" —and the Kennedy "media meisters" congratulate themselves on another brilliant maneuver.

There is a planet called Pacifica in Norman Spinrad's new novel, *A World Between*. It contains a lot of water with a scattering of ludicrously picturesque islands, and a human civilization combining the best aspects of New York, Los Angeles, and the South Pacific. Pacifica is the "media capital of the galaxy." The government is a "media democracy" based on a planetary ultra-TV system with thousands of channels, most of them two-way. By law, no one can be denied access to the media, and all-important votes are done instantaneously and electronically, involving the entire population. The economy of Pacifica is based on the export of filmed entertainments to the rest of the galaxy and also on Pacifica's position as a central clearinghouse for the analysis and dissemination of information among the myriad worlds settled by humanity. You might consider Pacifica as kind of a super TV network at the center of a tachyonic data web that keeps the settled worlds tied into a unified civilization.

So far, so good. This is the kind of thing that can make SF a valuable literary tool. Take an aspect of modern society, magnify it to extremes, and explore the ramifications of: "If this goes on . . ." This is apparently Spinrad's intent. He creates his media democracy, sets it before us, then tests it to its limits; two opposed factions arrive on Pacifica and spend the bulk of the book warring over the airwaves in a battle for the approval of the Pacificans.

There are enormously provocative possibilities here. The Pacificans are the product of a thousand years of cultural evolution in the usages of electronic media. They (and their audience) should bear the same relation to today's TV admen (and *their* audience—us) as the complex, interlocking global economy of the 1980s should bear to the bartering of Viking fur traders.

It saddens me to report that with a premise as full of potential as this, Spinrad fails abysmally. His biggest problem lies in the two struggling factions. They are offensive one-dimensional stereotypes of the worst sort.

The first to show up are the Transcendental Scientists. This is a male-dominated culture that has spread its beliefs throughout the galaxy by establishing institutes on various planets: institutes that indoctrinate their students into a fervent belief that Tran-

continued on page 65

COMIX

Illustration by John Workman

Jay Kinney

Part Three: **Good-bye to the 60s**

The Dadaists had the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. The surrealists, the Cyrano café in Paris. And the underground cartoonists had Gary Arlington's hole-in-the-wall comic book store, the San Francisco Comic Book Company.

These days San Francisco has at least five comic book shops and Berkeley several more, but in early 1968 when Gary first opened his shop on Twenty-third Street in the Mission District, he was one of a kind. Like many of the emerging UG artists, Gary was a big fan of EC comics from the fifties, a common interest the cartoonists discovered when they first dropped by the shop.

John Thompson came upon the store early on and brought Robert Crumb and Rick Griffin by to meet Gary that summer. Other cartoonists first met each other there, made plans, and sometimes traded Gary original art for books. With old comics lining the walls, the first few undergrounds on sale in a rack by the door, and Gary at the counter always ready to shoot the breeze, it was a ready-made cartoonists' hangout and remained so for years. Gary himself was to play a significant role at several key junctures in the history of UGs, and his name will turn up periodically as this chronology unfolds.

Every now and then the flow of history seems to suddenly quicken and 1968 was such a time. Martin Luther King was shot in April, Paris was near revolution in May, RFK was assassinated in June, the Chicago Democratic National Convention "riots" were in August, and all throughout the summer Red Guards turned China upside down. It was almost like Heinlein's SF story "The Year of the Jackpot" where cataclysms and world-shaking events begin to happen at such a pace that soon, following an exponential curve, it's the end of the universe! Well, that didn't quite happen that year; we just got Nixon, *Zap*, and *Snatch*.

Snatch Comics was the first under-the-counter underground. Jim Osborne had given Crumb a couple of those pocket-size "Gags and Gals" magazines from the forties (with names like *Army Laffs* or *Gee-whiz!*), much to Crumb's delight. Most of the UG cartoonists were aficionados of obscure popular culture — the more outlandish the better — and with *Zap* #2 now published and doing well, Crumb decided why not do a pocket-size

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FLIX

Photo compliments of CBS

Bhob

I saw a film today oh boy

Television breeds fear and suspicion. So said George Gerbner and Larry Gross in their four-year study on TV and human behavior, claiming that Americans who watch prime time TV more than four hours a day think the world is more dangerous than those who watch two hours or less. (See "The Scary World of TV's Heavy Viewer," *Psychology Today*, April, 1976.) "Fear," wrote Gerbner and Gross, "is a universal emotion and easy to exploit." This fact is well-known in the corridors of Madison Avenue advertising agencies where it has long been understood that advertising sometimes functions best by generating anxiety and intensifying phobic reactions. (Think about TV commercials you've seen for deodorants, insurance, burglar alarms,or Karl Malden's chilling "What will you do? What *will* you do?") Pick up any book on marketing or consumer behavior and you'll usually find "fear" listed in the index.

But now things have gotten out of hand; after motivation research sometimes involving psychogalvanic reflex response, high-

continued on page 60

MUZICK

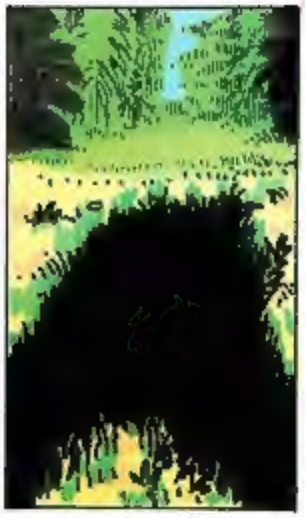
Lou Stathis

The rok press has the habit of reacting negatively to muzick that mixes the avant-garde with the mainstream. It's a natural reaction, I guess, from people who must routinely ingest a tediously unvarying diet of vinyl, and—against a deadline—sit down and knock together some cogent and relatively interesting words on the stuff, whether they liked it or not. In America we have the *Rolling Stone* syndrome, which, briefly stated, entails ignoring the avant-garde and looking disdainfully down the schnozzola at any avant-rok synthesis. Blandness rules. The British press, with at least three major rok weeklies to fill, has the room to be adventurous. Usually there are a couple of trained typists chained to the masthead of each paper to handle all the offbeat muzick that either slithers or pogos in the door. The savage pressure of a weekly deadline also encourages preprogrammed prejudicial responses, as well as a pernicious fashion consciousness fueled by paranoia (Christ, is skinhead reggae in style this week?).

The rok innovators are usually pretty easy for these bleary-eyed unfortunates to pick out from the otherwise bland and faceless horde. Most of the artists in question are busily sewing badges of intellectualism to their sleeves, and waving them about during interviews. Only the most feebleminded among us could possibly miss them. A more difficult task is recognizing and giving proper credit to those who take the frequently unlistenable muzick of the intellectuals and, injecting liberal doses of mainstream vitality (i.e., a good beat), come up with something both artistically viable and enjoyable on a purely sensual level. Raymond Chandler was probably the prototype of this breed of artist-synthesizer, combining his tight-ass British lit'ry snob sensibilities with the narrative vigor of the vernacular American detective story (borrowed from Dashiell Hammett and

continued on page 63

A dark form swung down,



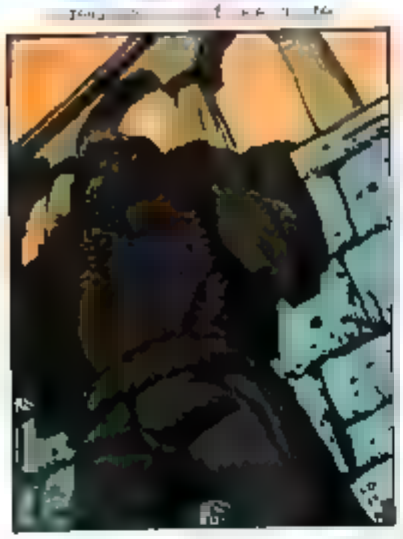
stood watching,

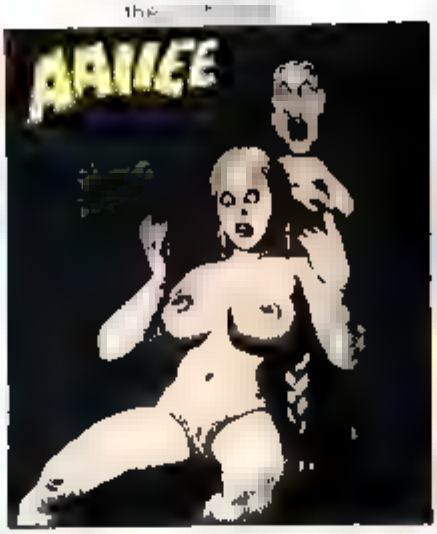
turned to Wolfton,

and left.

A hand grasped the balcony's edge.

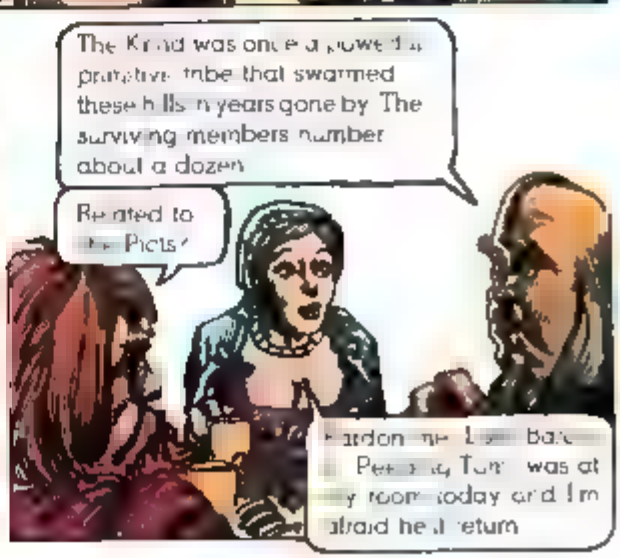
Two animal eyes watched hungrily.





It was dusk when St. [illegible] and the soldiers returned from the castle. As the Baron [illegible] and prepared [illegible] at the knight related his day's adventure.

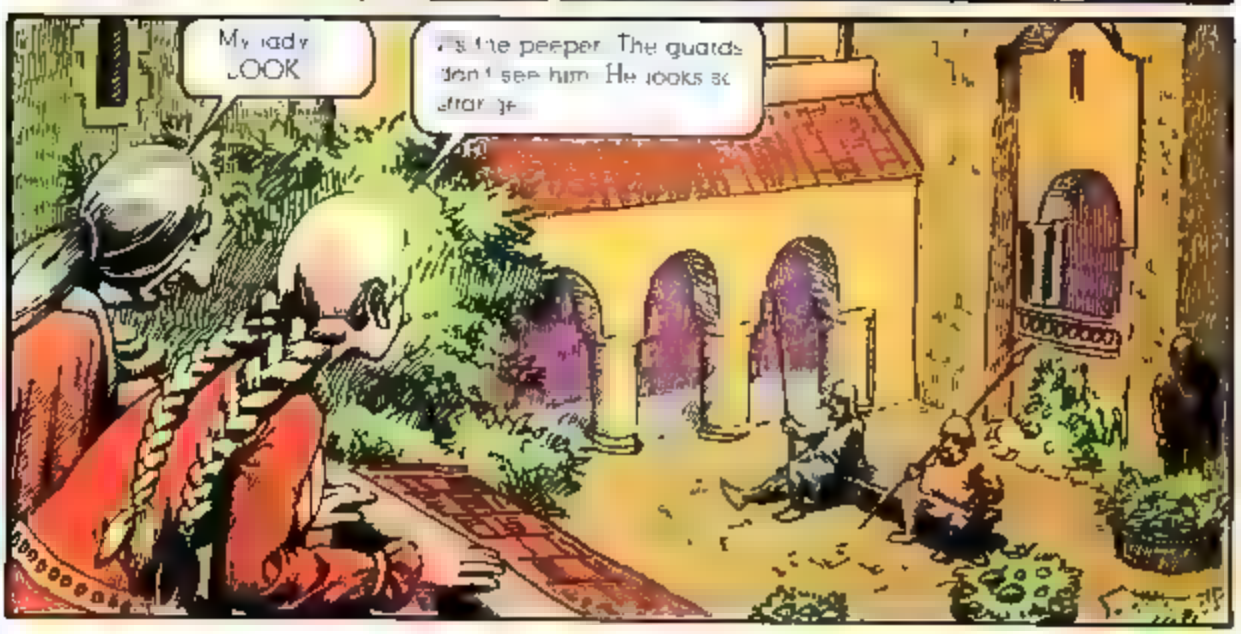
[illegible]en the unseen monster set [illegible] upon one of the men. I pursued it but like a lameuss wrath, it was [illegible]
Fear not gentle people tomorrow I shall resume the quest. Tomorrow evening we shall gaze upon [illegible] body trophy. Its head


The Knnd was once a powerful primitive tribe that swarmed these hills [illegible] years gone by. The surviving members number about a dozen
Related to the Picts?
[illegible]rdon me, Lord Baron. Peasant Tom was at my room today and I'm afraid he'll return

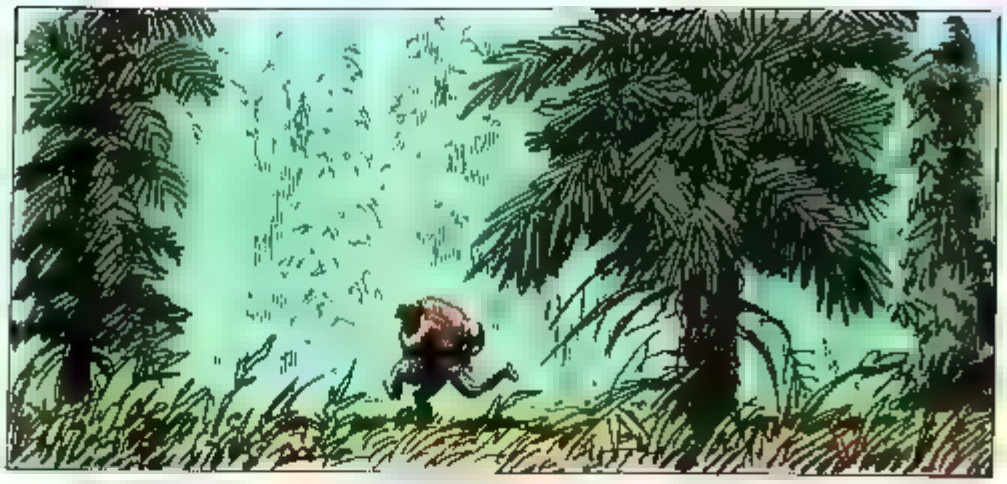
Why [illegible] this disgrace! None of my men would. I'll place a guard or two in the garden below your balcony. Perhaps we'll have a double hanging.

Lady Chabita's thoughts returned again and again to the prospect of the impending party and wished sincerely that Homib would share the thief's fate. She endured this ass again. Her frustration and hatred grew

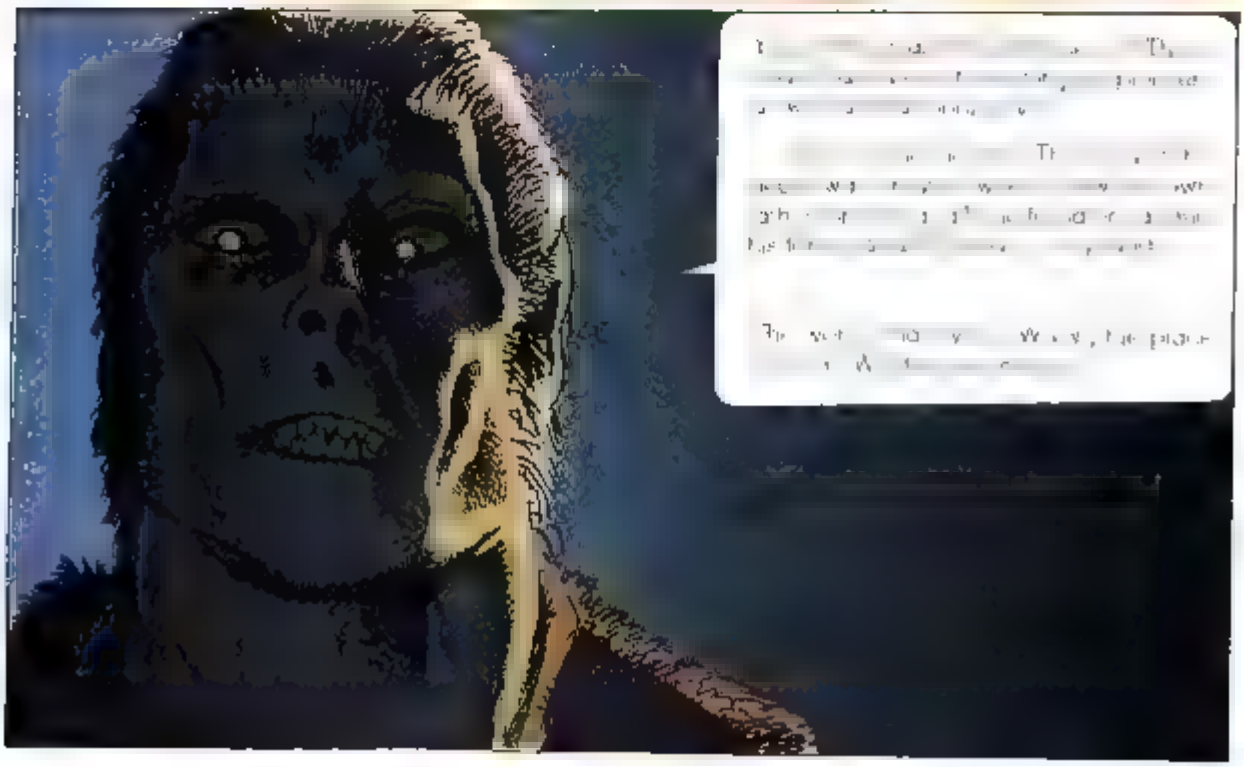
The na ghq -pocrade was a relief from the day's boredom. The Kand hermit had slain one of the Baron's swine and butchered it. His guilt was proved on rather circumstantial evidence, but it was sufficient.

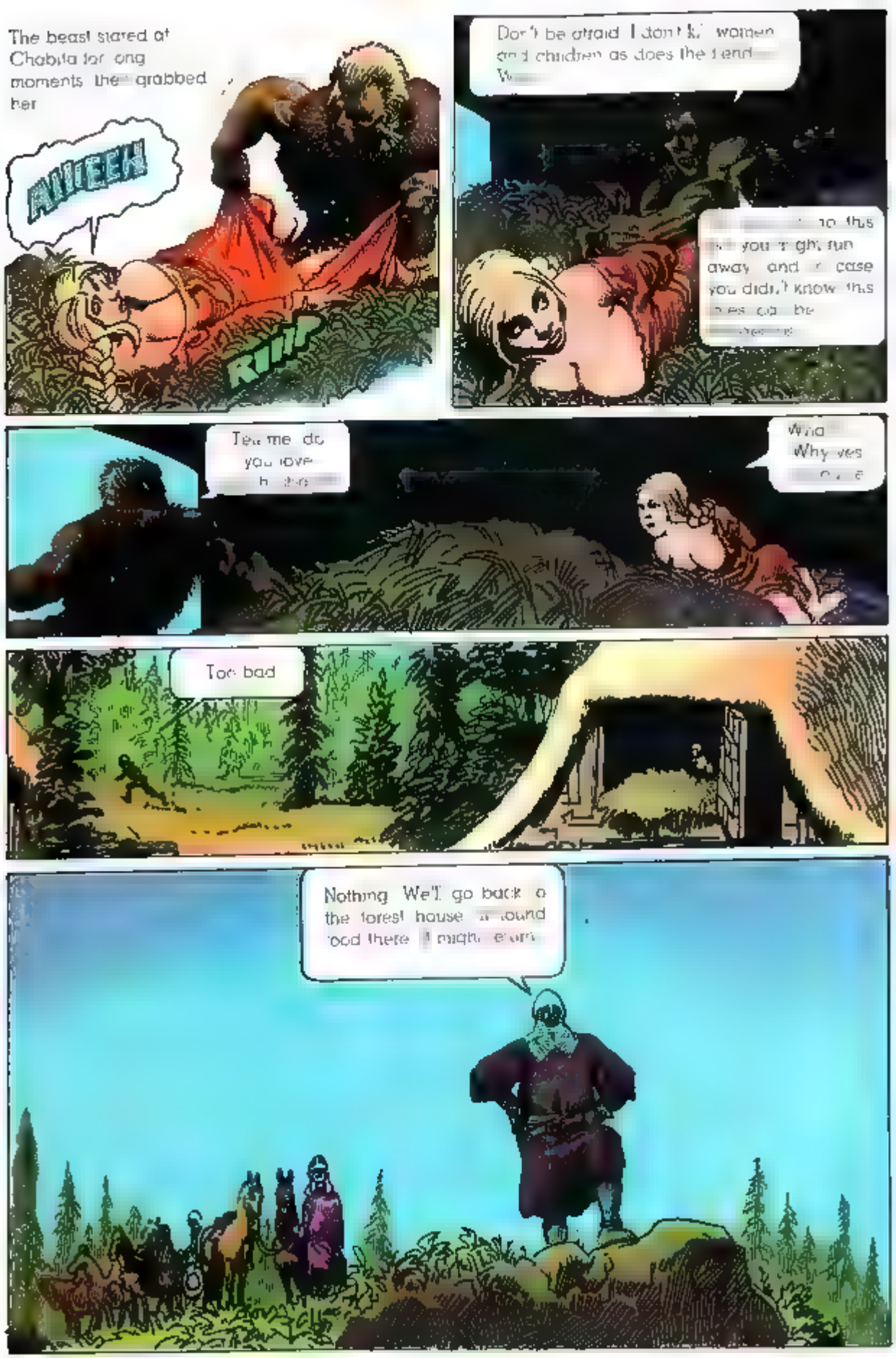


AGH
GRRRR
ROOM RR
WHOMB



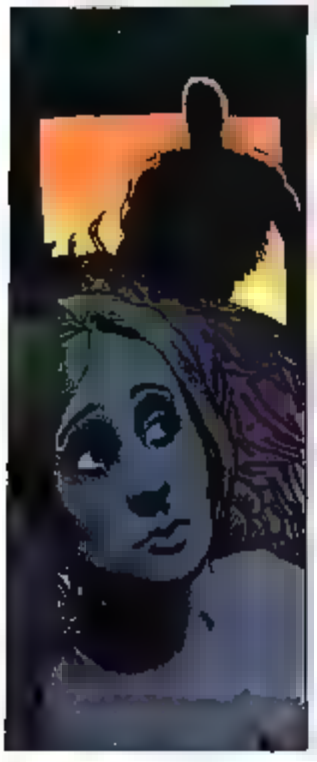
Don't
are the
monster

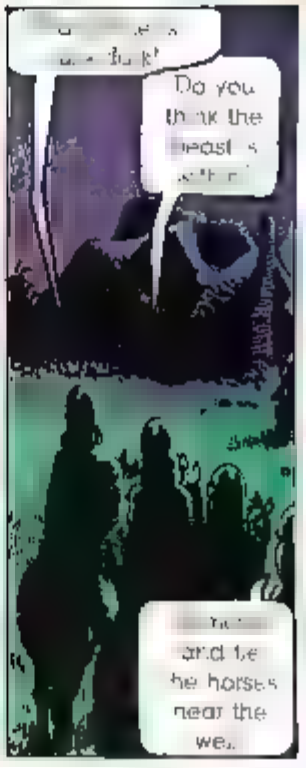



The beast stared at Chabita for long moments then grabbed her
AIIEEH
RIIIP
Don't be afraid I don't kill women and children as does the fiend
Tell me do you love him
What Why yes
Too bad
Nothing We'll go back to the forest house around food there I might learn

Soon the group was
canter
arro
the
Chab
the
was
and
squeezes
fortunus

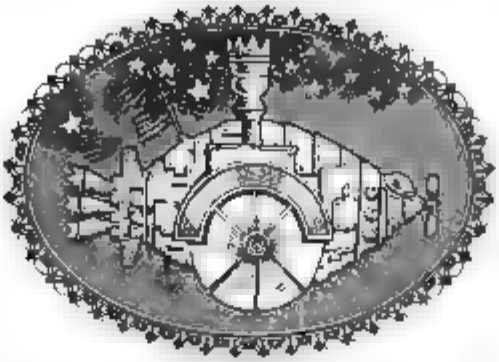
Damnation! It must have happened when we were going along single file
NO! You mean the beast has taken them?
Yes. We must stay in a close group and move quickly





He's been in there long enough
Look at the chimney. The smoke is going
YEEAAAAAGH
The Vikings drew their swords and entered ready for battle
Here he is. What's the matter, Albert
KLIPITY KLIPITY
WHOA! WHOA!
to be continued

THE ADVENTURES OF PROFESSOR THINTWHISTLE AND HIS INCREDIBLE AETHER FLYER



STORY: DICK JUPOFF

ART: STEVE STILES

CHAPTER TWO

WHEN WE LAST ENCOUNTERED PROFESSOR THINTWHISTLE AND HIS STALWART COMPANIONS, THEY STOOD POISED ON THE VERY BRINK OF HISTORY--AND THE EDGE OF REVOLUTIONARY HILL! HAVING THUS PREPARED THE "CHESTER ALAN ARTHUR" FOR HER LUNAR VOYAGE, THE PROFESSOR PULLED THE LEVER THAT CONTROLLED THE "ARTHUR"S PROPULSIVE MECHAN SM AND THE MIGHTY CRAFT LAUNCHED ITSELF INTO THE GAPING VOID!

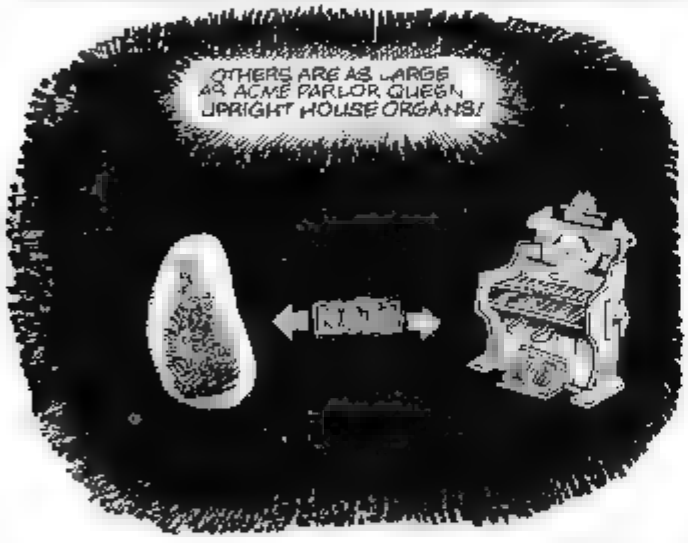
WHIZZAH!

WHIZZAH! WE ARE MOVING, PROFESSOR! YOUR THEORIES ARE VINDICATED AT LAST!

NATURALLY, YOU YOUNG DOLT! COULD THERE HAVE EVER BEEN A DOUBT!?

THE TRAVELLERS EN ROUTE TO OUR LUNAR CONSORT!
CHUF!
CHUF!
CHUF!
DEAR RE
HAT'S R GHT
OMPLETEL
SSFSSFU
OFF
JEFFERSON!- SOME COMESTIBLES FOR MASTER HERKIMER AND MYSELF WITH WHICH TO CELEBRATE THE SUCCESSFUL COMMENCEMENT OF OUR GREAT VOYAGE.
YOU MAY TAKE AN EXTRA TOT OF GINGER BEER IN THE SERVANT'S QUARTERS.
HERKIMER, HIS BRIGHTLY PATTERNED BOW TIE STANDING IN SPRUCE CONTRAST TO A FRESH CELLULOID COLLAR FROM JESHAW CALLISTER'S DRY GOODS EMPORIUM, ADDRESSED IN THE MOST RESPECTFUL TONES THE FOLLOWING INQUIRY TO HIS AGED (BUT WELL BELOVED) MENTOR
BUT PROFESSOR, HOW DOES THE 'ARTHUR' MAINTAIN HER FORWARD VELOCITY HERE IN THE VOID WHEN THERE IS, IN FACT, LITTLE OR NO ATMOSPHERE IN THIS REGION..
..THERE IS NOTHING HERE TO PUSH AGAINST!
WHY, LAD, DID YOUR OWN PATER NEVER DISCUSS SUCH MATTERS WITH YOU?
IF HE BUT KNEW THE TRUTH, IT MIGHT SHATTER HIS FRAIL MENTALITY!
MEANWHILE, LET US TURN OUR RAPT ATTENTION ELSEWHERE DEAR READER) TO THE IMMENSE EXPANSES TO THE DAPPLED VAULTS OF OUTER SPACE...
WHEN THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE SET HIS HAND TO ITS GREAT WORK ON THE MORNING OF OCTOBER 23, 4004 BC, HE MADE NOT ONLY EARTH, FIRE, AIR, AND WATER, AS MAN HAVE BELIEVED.
CREATED THE ASTEROIDS!

THESE "CELESTIAL BODIES" ARE SOMETIMES THOUGHT TO BE THE PITIFUL REMNANTS OF SOME MIGHTY PLANET THAT ONCE EXISTED AT SOME ANCIENT TIME! PERHAPS DESTROYED BY NATURAL CAUSES OR DIVINE INTERVENTION - OR PERHAPS BY THE UNHOLY APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE WROUGHT BY AN ERRING SUPER CIVILIZATION!!



ON ONE SUCH A MAMMOTH CELESTIAL BODY, AS I WHIZZED THROUGH THE BLACK VOID THAT FILLS THE SPACE BETWEEN THE WORLDS, THERE WAS NOW ASSEMBLED A GATHERING OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT THAT WAS MOST LIKELY THE MOST **ODDLY ASSORTED** AND **REMARKABLE** EVER TO BE SEEN IN ONE SPOT! A SQUAD OF IMPERIAL **FRENCH GRENADIERS** STOOD ARRAYED WITH A GANG OF **ZULUS**. BESIDE THEM A UNIT OF TSARIST **COSSACKS**; WITH THEM A GRUMBLING CREW OF NAKED **CAVEMEN** WIELDING WOODEN CLUBS AND STONE AXES. **PANZER** UNITS WITH THE DREAD "**COMMANCHE DRAGONS**" YOUTH CLUB OF YORKVILLE, MANHATTAN. **SAMURAI** AND **INCAS, GURKHAS** AND **LOBSTER BACKS** ALL WERE ARRAYED IN FULL **BATTLE DRESS**, BEAR NO EQUIPMENT OF **WAR!**

BEFORE THEM STOOD THEIR COMMANDER, WHOM WE SHALL IN DUE COURSE MEET. BUT FIRST, LET US RETURN TO THE "**CHESTER ALAN ARTHUR**"!

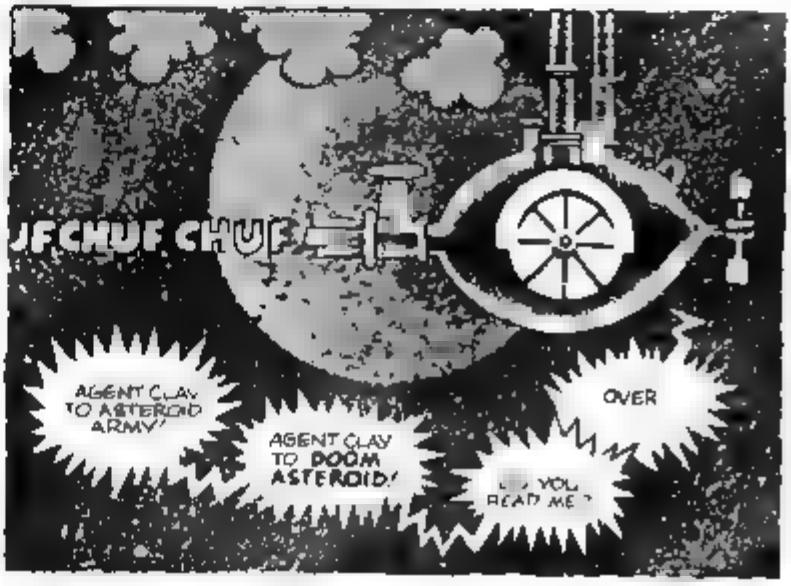
... AND SO YOU SEE, DEAR BOY, AS LONG AS OUR SUPPLY OF STOUT BITUMINOUS COAL REMAINS, WE HAVE NAUGHT TO FEAR FOR HAVING NAUGHT TO PUSH AGAINST!
BEE?
O JUPITER OF MINDY
O AUGUSTINE OF SOUL!

WHILE THE PROFESSOR LUBRICATES THE CRANIUM OF HERKIMER WITH THE WONDERS OF PHYSICAL PHILOSOPHY, PERFIDY THREATENS!
LET THOSE TWO MEANDER ON! I'VE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO ATTEND TO!

IT IS NONE OTHER THAN JEFFERSON JACKSON CLAY! HAVING SOLIDLY BOLTED THE HATCHWAY LEADING TO THE SERVANTS QUARTERS, THE PLISKY AFR CAN HAD REMOVED FROM A PLACE OF CONCEALMENT A SINISTER HELMET OF RATHER UNUSUAL DESIGN, CLAMPING IT FIRMLY TO H.S FUZZY POLL!

A CURLING INSULATED WIRE LED FROM THE HELMET TO A PANEL OF INSTRUMENTS REVEALED WITH THE UNLOCKING OF A RUN-DOWN, SECONDHAND ROLLTOP DESK
HMM... OHMMETER NEEDS PRECISION CALIBRATION

AND THEN, AS THE VALIANT LITTLE CRAFT BEARING THE THREE BUFFALO FALLSIANS CHUFFED BRAVELY THROUGH THE EMPTINESS OF THE OUTER EXPANSES, THE DRAWLING AND SLOVENLY VOICE OF THE BLACKAMOOR, NOW TRANED TO A TOTALLY UNEXPECTED CRISPNESS, CRACKLED MENACINGLY THROUGH THE AETHER...



ON THE SALOON, INNOCENT OF THE TREACHERY TAKING PLACE BEH ND BOLTED HATCHES
FORMAGGIO WILL SERVE AS WELL AS
OH FOUNT OF ENLIGHTENMENT!
OH SAVANT SUBLIME!
BUT IN THE SERVANT'S QUARTERS
HASTEN FOR THE FOOLS
MEANWHILE, BACK ON THAT MYSTERIOUS CELESTIAL BODY, THE DOOM ASTEROID.
VERY WELL, CLAY OLD CHAP, WE SHALL HOME IN YOUR AUTOMATIC
SET SOON BOARD
AND YOU, YOU FOOL OF ETHROP SHALL BECOME EMITHEREENS
BACK IN THE SERVANT'S QUARTERS
FOOL!
UPON THE DOOM ASTEROID, FROM WHICH THE "ARTHUR" COULD NOW BE SEEN AS A TINY SPECK AGAINST THE STYGIAN DARKNESS OF THE VOID, LEFTENANT BUTHERING-SNIPE DISMANTLED HIS COMMUNICATIONS MECHANISM AND TURNED TO ADDRESS HIS ODDLY ASSORTED ARMY...
IN YOUR TOES NOW MEN, 'TIS A CHANCE FOR DEATH AND GLORY WHICH FACES US TODAY!
ON BOARD THE 'ARTHUR' JEFFERSON QUIETLY MADE HIS WAY TO THE POWER ROOM. HERE HE SET IN MOTION A SINISTER IMPORT
UPON THE DOOM ASTEROID
THE ARTHUR COULD NOW BE SEEN AS AN OBJECT AS LARGE AS A MAN'S TORSO...
YES, YOU SOLDIERS OF THE EMPIRE, IT'S A STEP UPPER, P TODAY AND LIBERTY IN THE NAME OF ARTER FOR YE SWARTHY CHAPS
ON BOARD THE ARTHUR JEFFERSON MCKSIN CLAY ADDED EXTRA HOT WATER INTO THE BOILER THAT FURNISHED THE STEAM THAT KEPT THE AETHERFLYER MOVING STEADILY THROUGH THE DARKNESS OF SPACE...

UPON THE DOOM ASTEROID, FROM WHICH THE "ARTHUR" COULD NOW BE SEEN AS A CRAFT OF ASTONISHING SIZE VIRTUALLY FILLING THE SKY BLOCKING OUT THE VOID BEYOND
OH I SAY THERE! SHE IS A TRIFLE LARGER THAN I HAD ANTICIPATED!
CHUF CHUF CHUF
ON BOARD THE "ARTHUR" JEFFERSON CHUCKLED FIENDISHLY AS HE STOKED THE MIGHTY BOILER FURNACE
HEH HEH HEH
CHUF CHUF CHUF
HELP!
STOP!
JEFFERSON
BUT THERE WAS NO RESPONSE FROM THE ISRAELITE AND THE DOOM ASTEROID SWEPT ON INTO THE SMOKESTACK OF THE AETHER FLYER THERE TO TUMBLE UPON THE HOT FURNACE COALS
CRACKLE! HISS!
AS HIS MEN SCREAMED AND RAN FRANTICALLY FLINGING THEIR TINY WEAPONS IN ALL DIRECTIONS, BUT TO NO AVAIL LIEUTENANT BLITHERING-SNIPE TURNED HIS DESPAIRING FACE HEAVENWARD
DON'T MISS IT IF YOU CAN!

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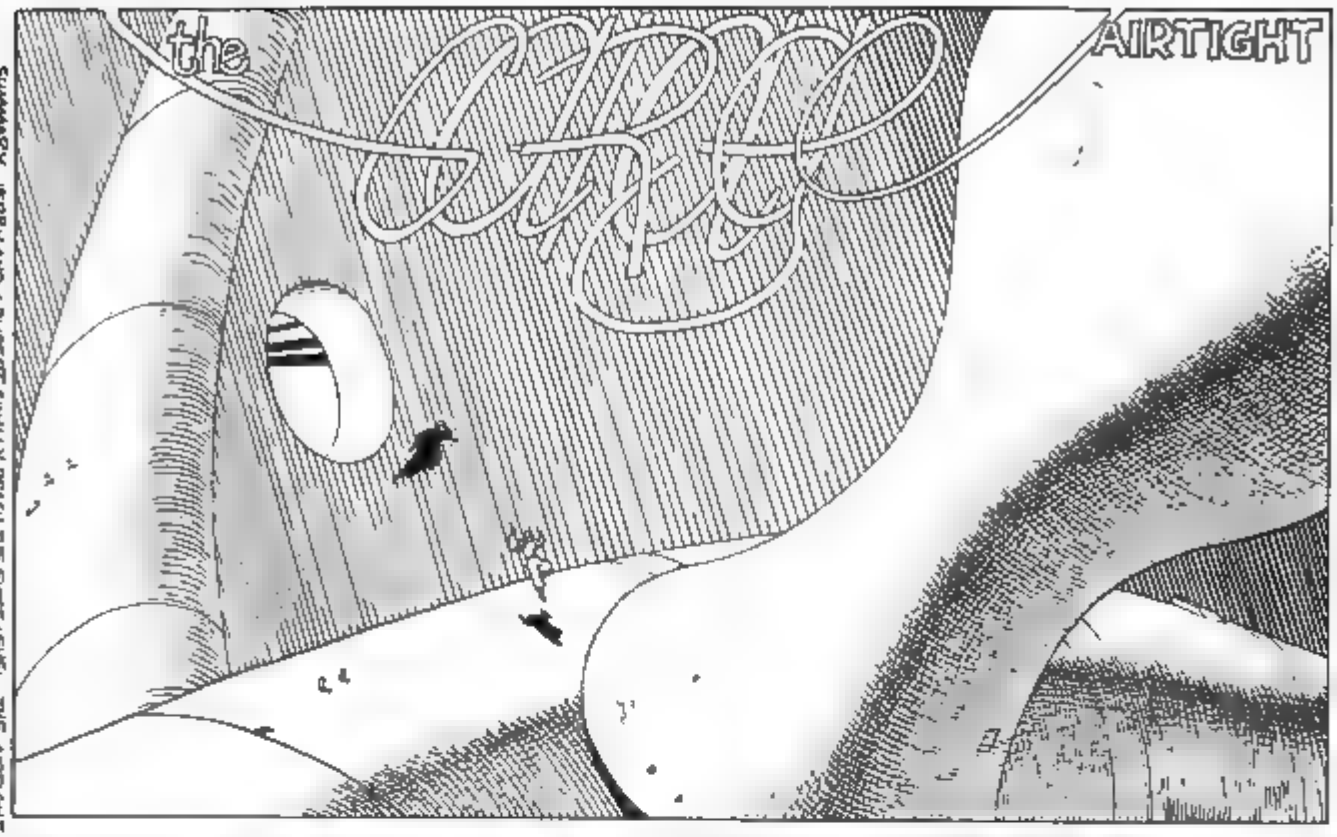
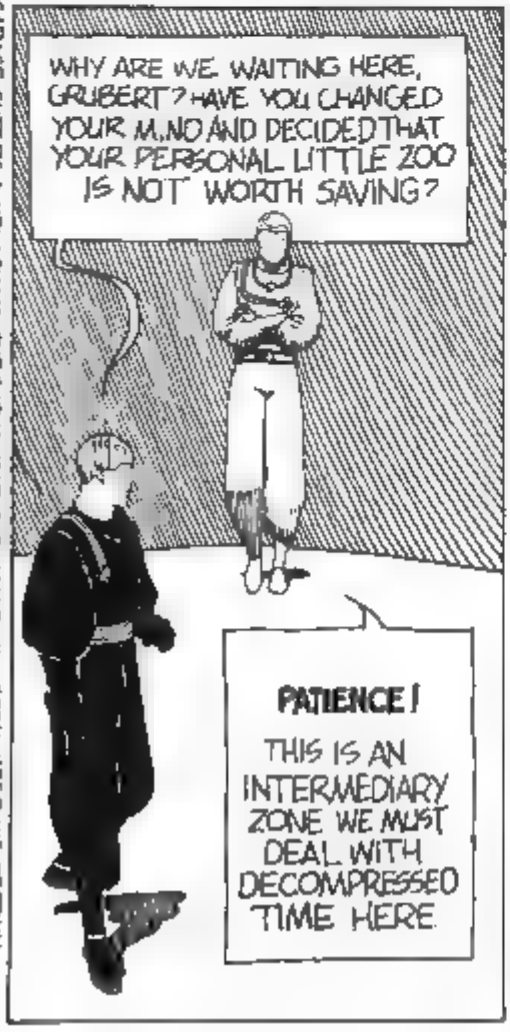
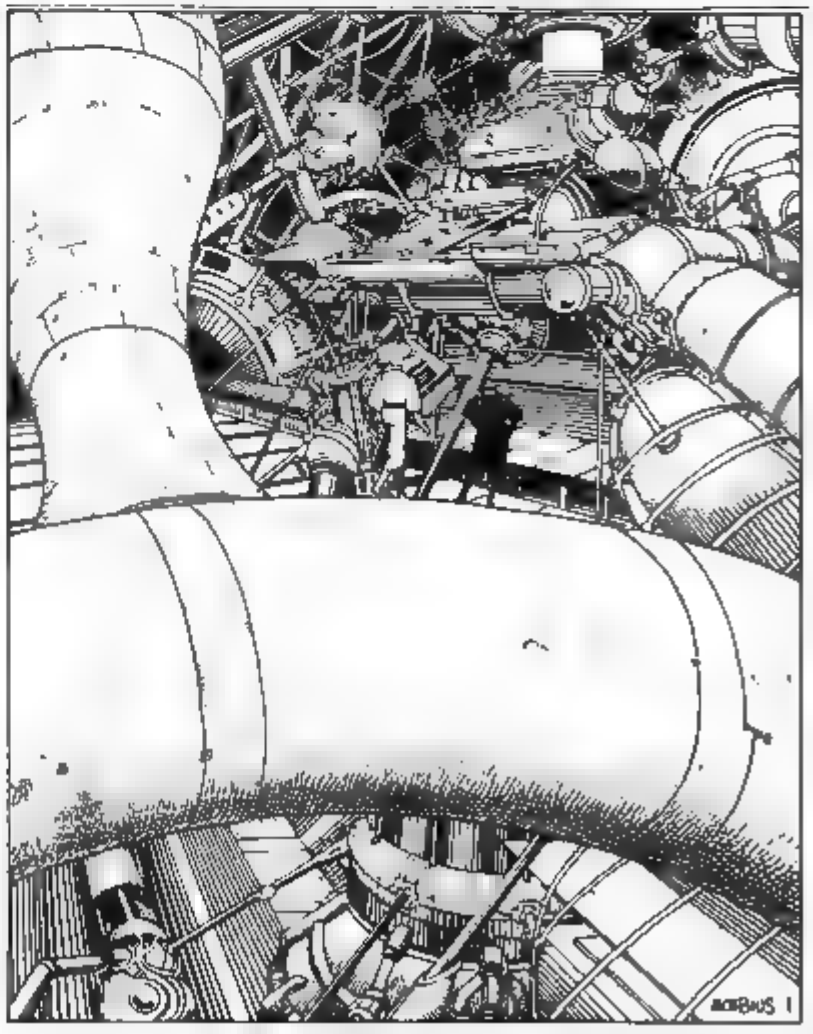
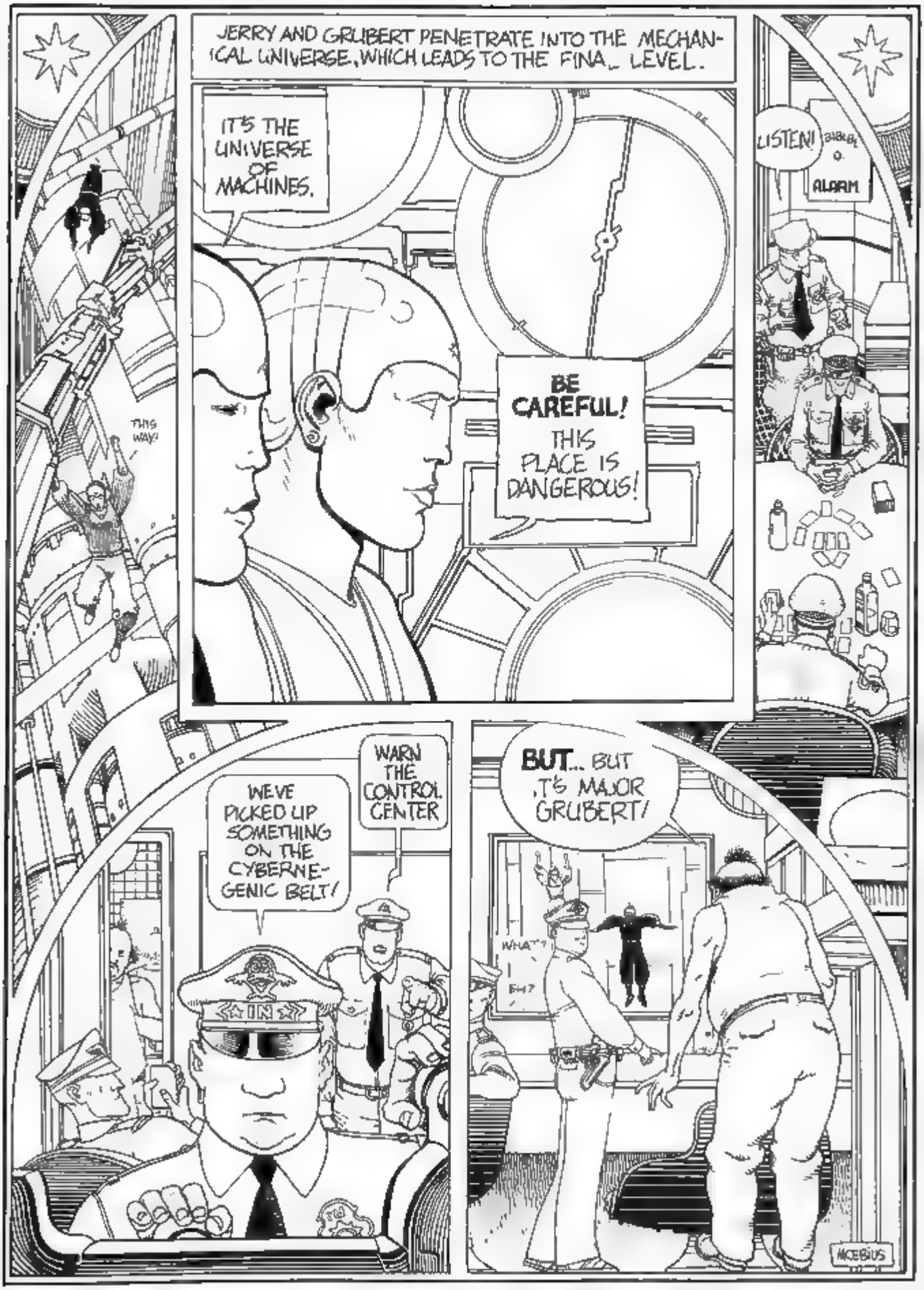
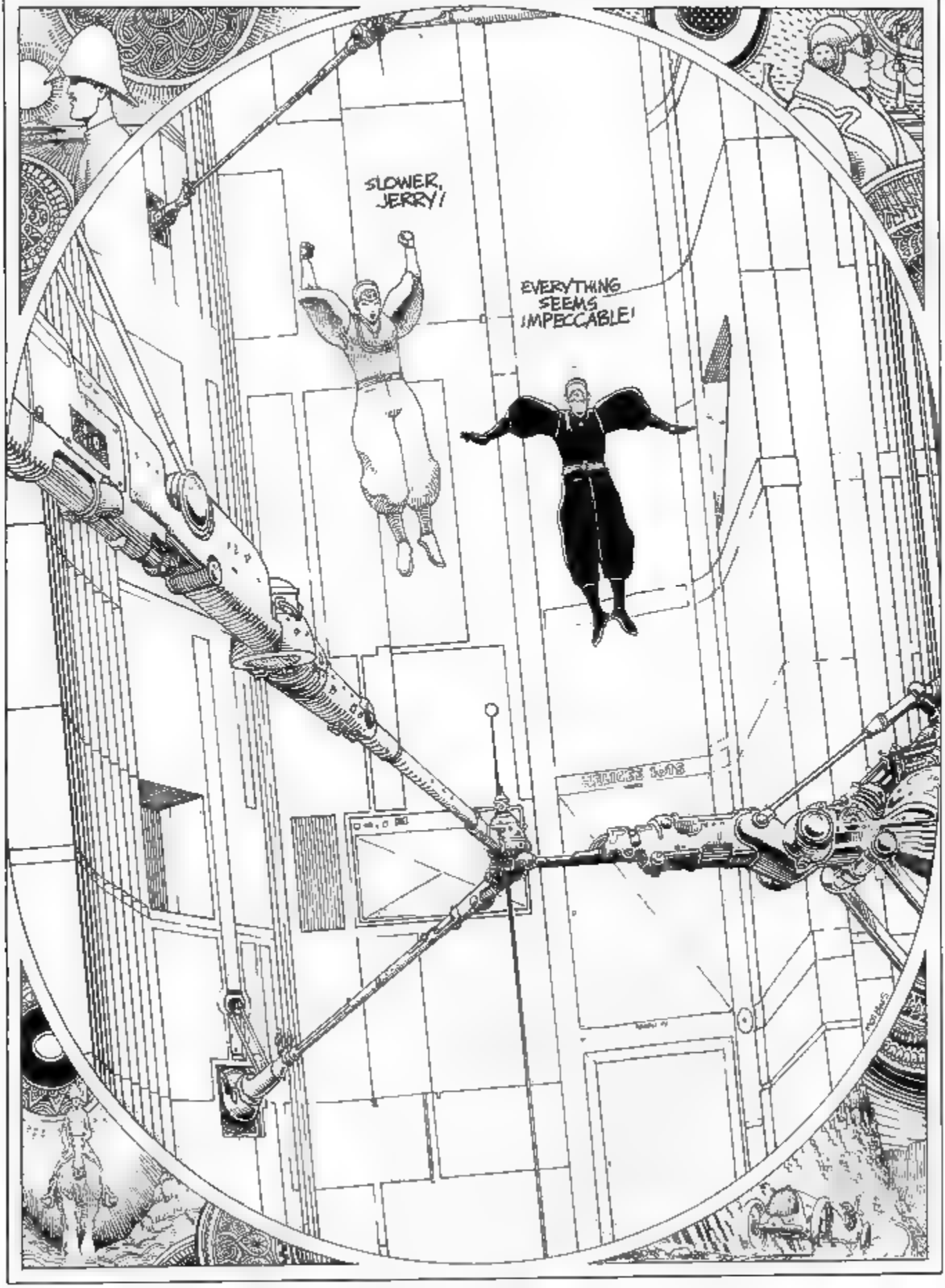


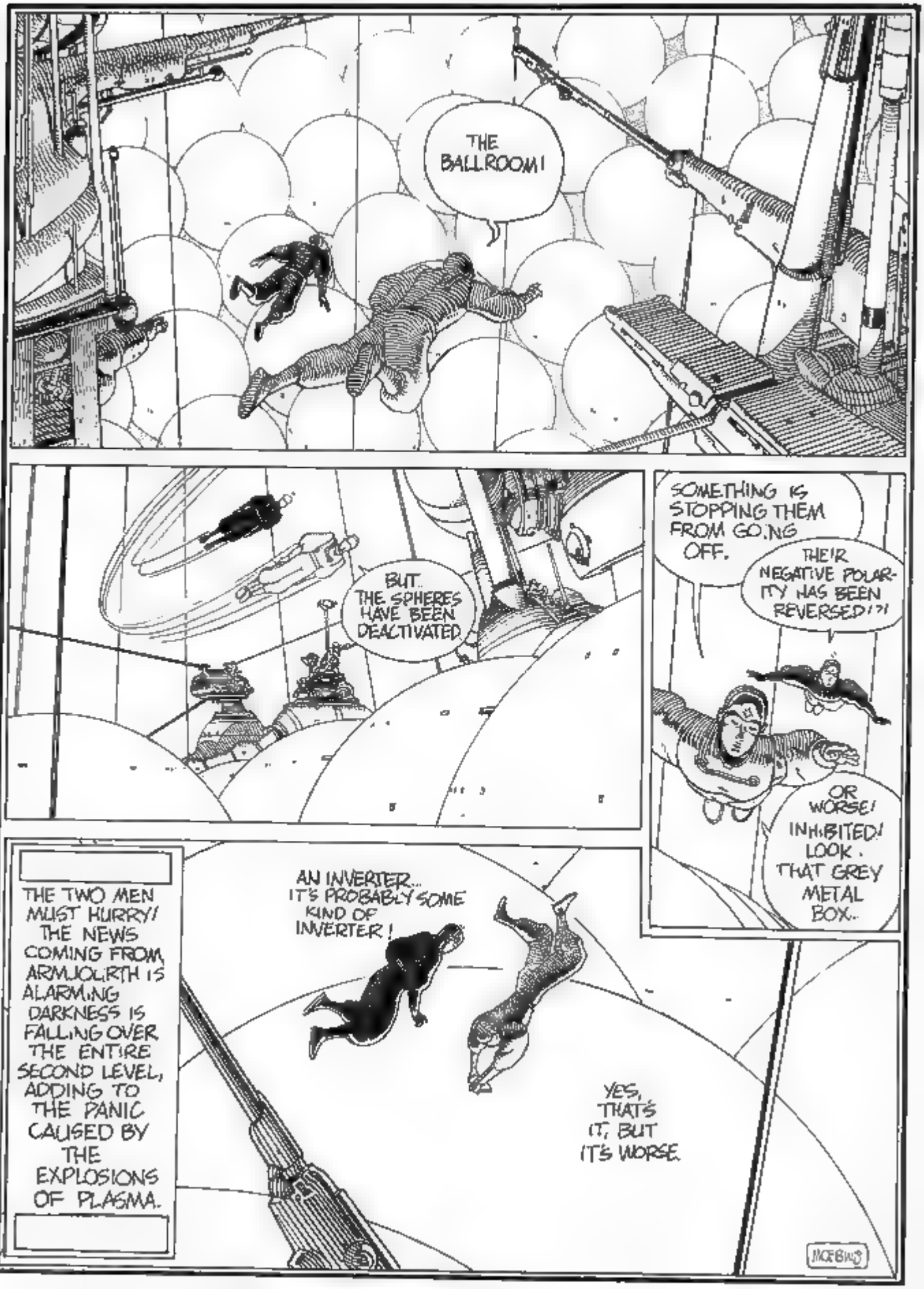
SUMMARY: JERRY AND GRUBERT FINALLY REACH THE FIRST LEVEL. THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE ENTERS A NEW PHASE. THE END IS NEAR. THE MAJOR WILL SOON MEET HIS DESTINY.

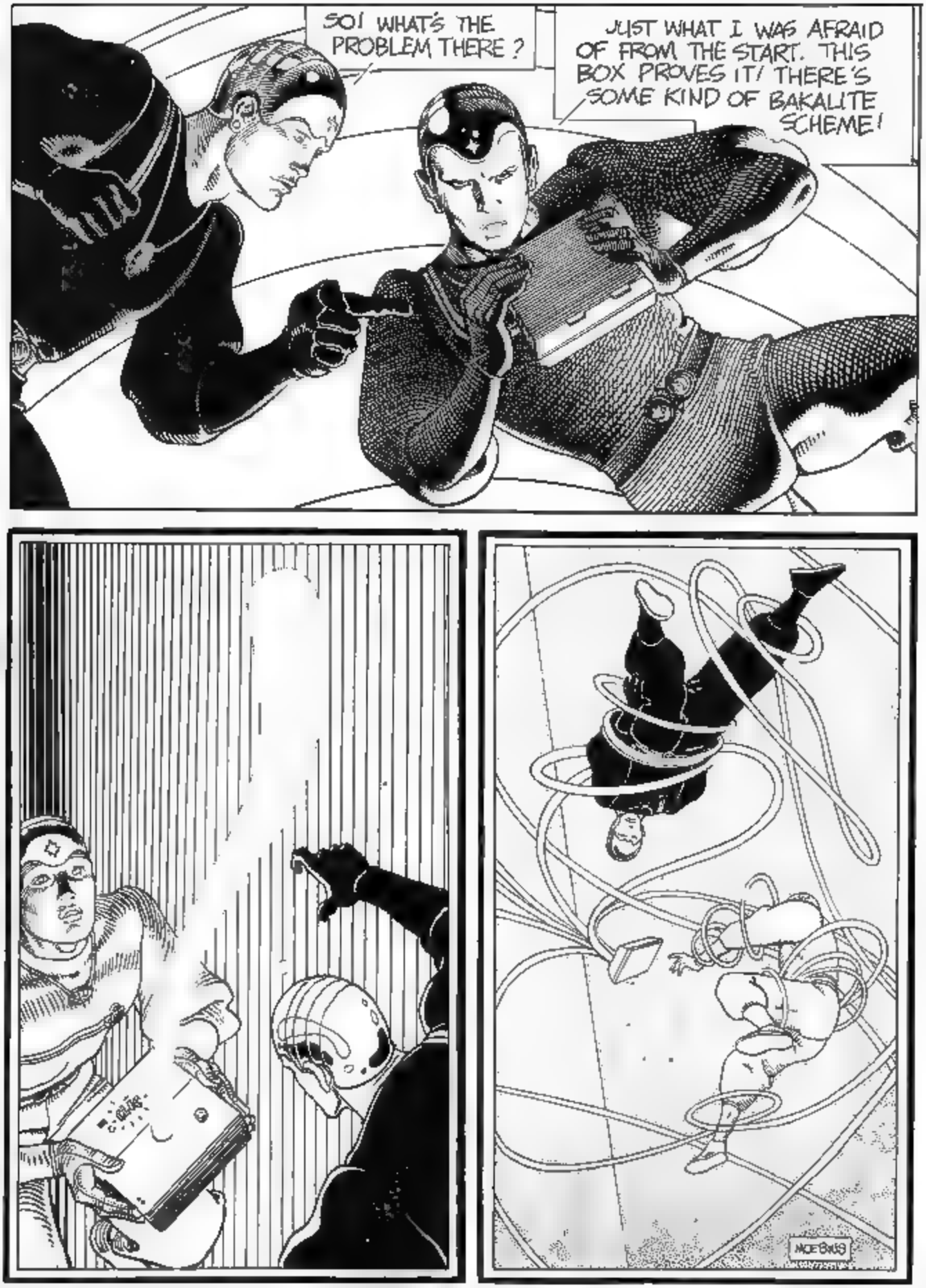

WHY ARE WE WAITING HERE, GRUBERT? HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND AND DECIDED THAT YOUR PERSONAL LITTLE ZOO IS NOT WORTH SAVING?
PATIENCE! THIS IS AN INTERMEDIARY ZONE WE MUST DEAL WITH DECOMPRESSED TIME HERE



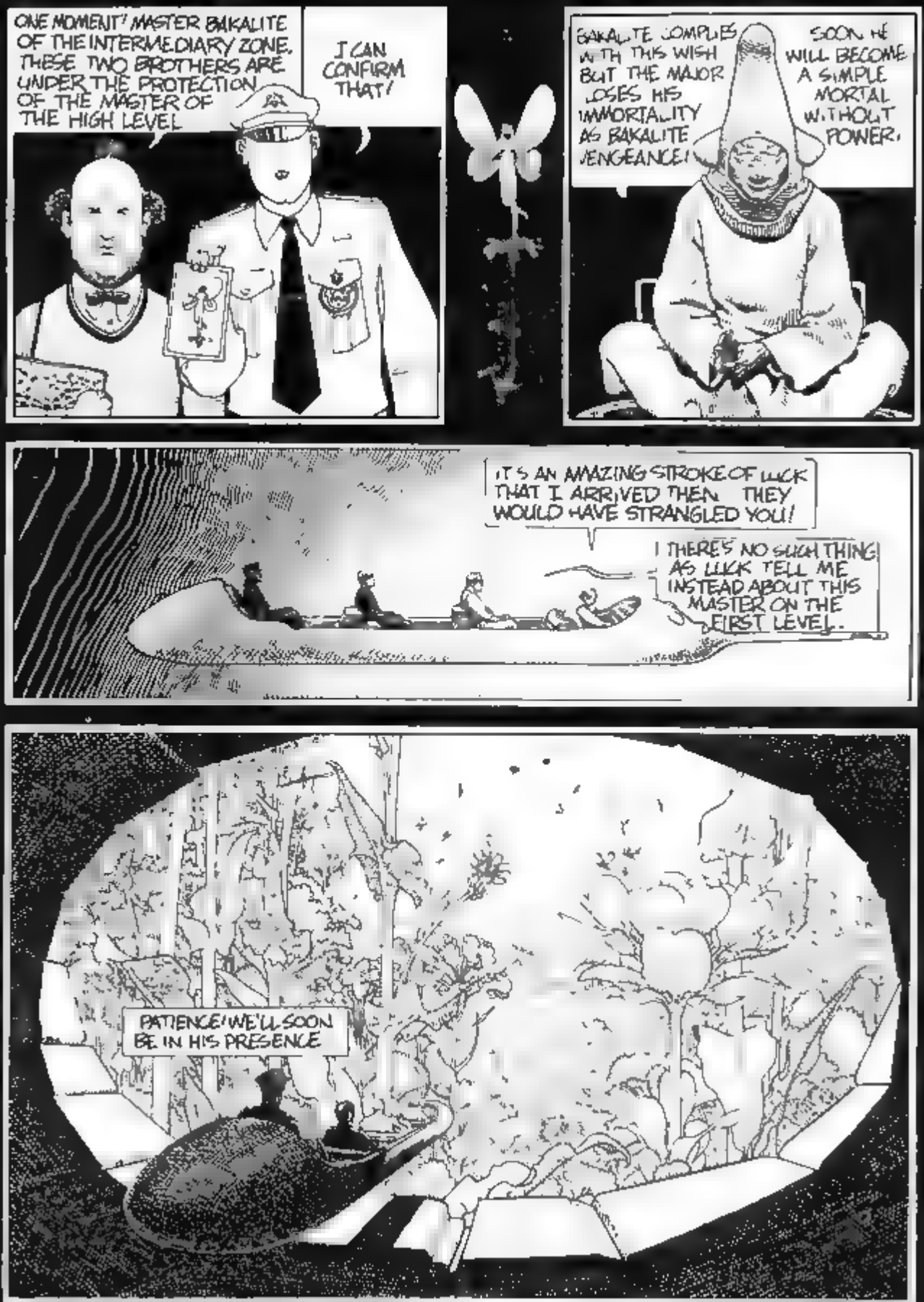

JERRY AND GRUBERT PENETRATE INTO THE MECHANICAL UNIVERSE, WHICH LEADS TO THE FINAL LEVEL.
IT'S THE UNIVERSE OF MACHINES.
BE CAREFUL! THIS PLACE IS DANGEROUS!
THIS WAY!
LISTEN!
BIBLBL
ALARM
WE'VE PICKED UP SOMETHING ON THE CYBERNEGENIC BELT!
WARN THE CONTROL CENTER
IN
BUT... BUT IT'S MAJOR GRUBERT!
WHAT?
EH?
MOEBIUS


SLOWER, JERRY!
EVERYTHING SEEMS IMPECCABLE!


THE BALLROOM!
BUT... THE SPHERES HAVE BEEN DEACTIVATED
SOMETHING IS STOPPING THEM FROM GOING OFF.
THEIR NEGATIVE POLARITY HAS BEEN REVERSED!?!
OR WORSE! INHIBITED! LOOK. THAT GREY METAL BOX..
THE TWO MEN MUST HURRY! THE NEWS COMING FROM ARMJOURTH IS ALARMING DARKNESS IS FALLING OVER THE ENTIRE SECOND LEVEL, ADDING TO THE PANIC CAUSED BY THE EXPLOSIONS OF PLASMA.
AN INVERTER... IT'S PROBABLY SOME KIND OF INVERTER!
YES, THAT'S IT, BUT IT'S WORSE.
MOEBIUS

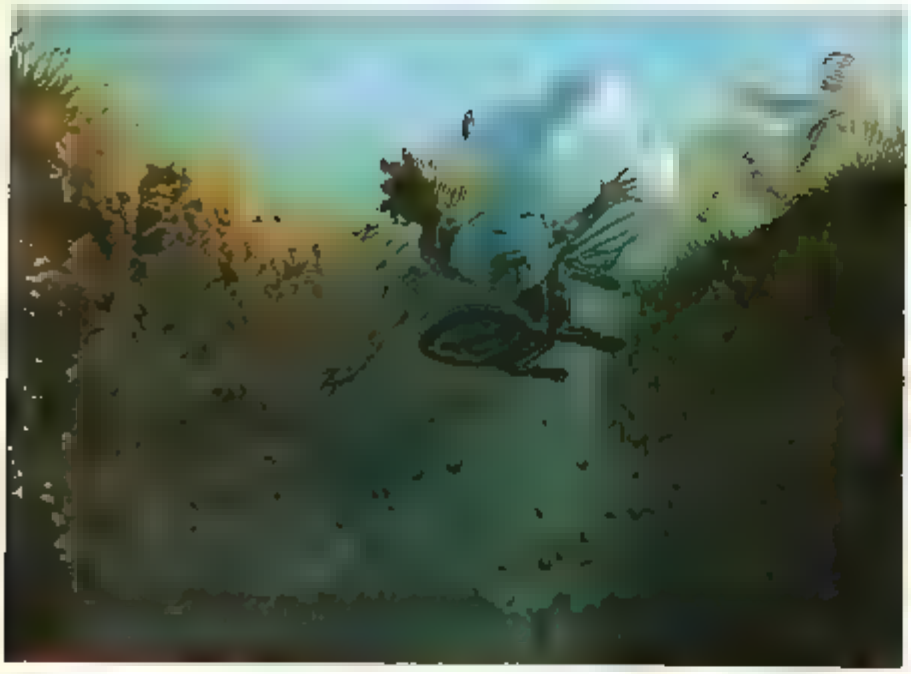

SO! WHAT'S THE PROBLEM THERE?
JUST WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF FROM THE START. THIS BOX PROVES IT! THERE'S SOME KIND OF BAKALITE SCHEME!
MOEBIUS

LATER, IN AN UNAFFECTED GALLERY
BERGER TO CONTRO..! BERGER TO CONTROL
HERE'S A TYPICALLY BAKALITE TRICK..
I WISH I'D HAD THE CHANCE TO EXPLAIN SOMETHING OF THIS TO YOU BEFORE-!
CALM YOURSELF, BLACK FLY. THE PERSON WHO BROUGHT YOU HERE IS PATIENT HE REMAINS IMMOBILE& MUTE IN THE CEN TER OF THE TAPESTRY OF TIME
BAKALITE! CRIMINAL!! THIEF! GO BACK TO THE EMPTY VOID OF YOUR REAL DOMAIN!
WE HAVE FOLLOWED THE MAJOR ACROSS ALL THE WORLDS NOW LET'S SHOW HIM BAKALITE VENGEANCE...
GUARDS! STRANGLE THE VICTIMS TO THE DEATH.
HERE'S WHERE YOUR CRAZ NESS CEASES, GRUBER
BERGER TO CONTRO.. COME IN


ONE MOMENT! MASTER BAKALITE OF THE INTERMEDIARY ZONE. THESE TWO BROTHERS ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE MASTER OF THE HIGH LEVEL
I CAN CONFIRM THAT!
BAKALITE COMPLIES WITH THIS WISH BUT THE MAJOR LOSES HIS IMMORTALITY AS BAKALITE VENGEANCE!
SOON HE WILL BECOME A SIMPLE MORTAL WITHOUT POWER.
IT'S AN AMAZING STROKE OF LUCK THAT I ARRIVED THEN THEY WOULD HAVE STRANGLED YOU!
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS LUCK TELL ME INSTEAD ABOUT THIS MASTER ON THE FIRST LEVEL.
PATIENCE! WE'LL SOON BE IN HIS PRESENCE

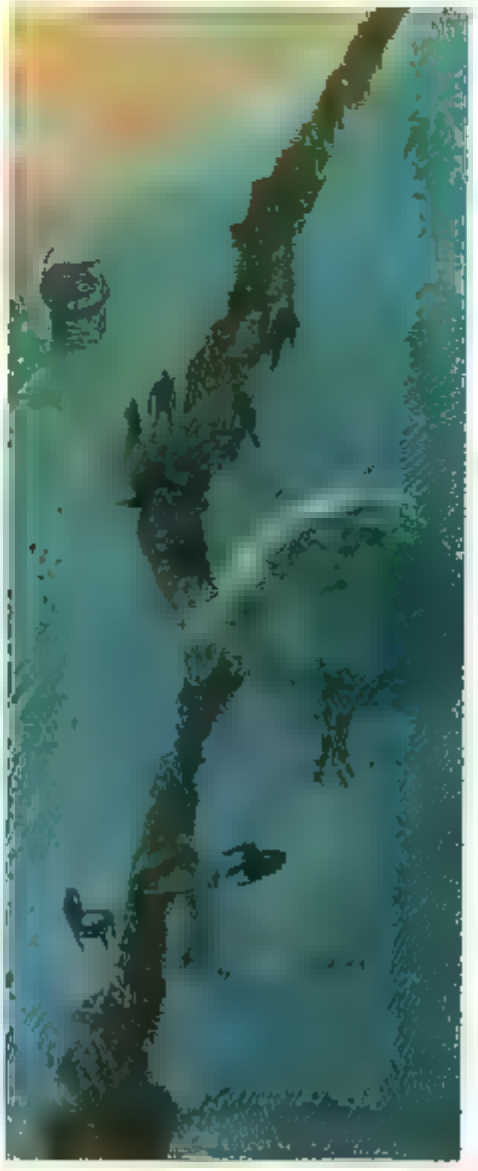
TO BE CONTINUED

THE CREVASSE
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? OUR YOUNG FRIENDS HAVE YET TO FIND THEIR CONJUGAL BED.
WE DON'T NEED ONE BUT NATURE IS OUR BED.
HA HA
HA HA

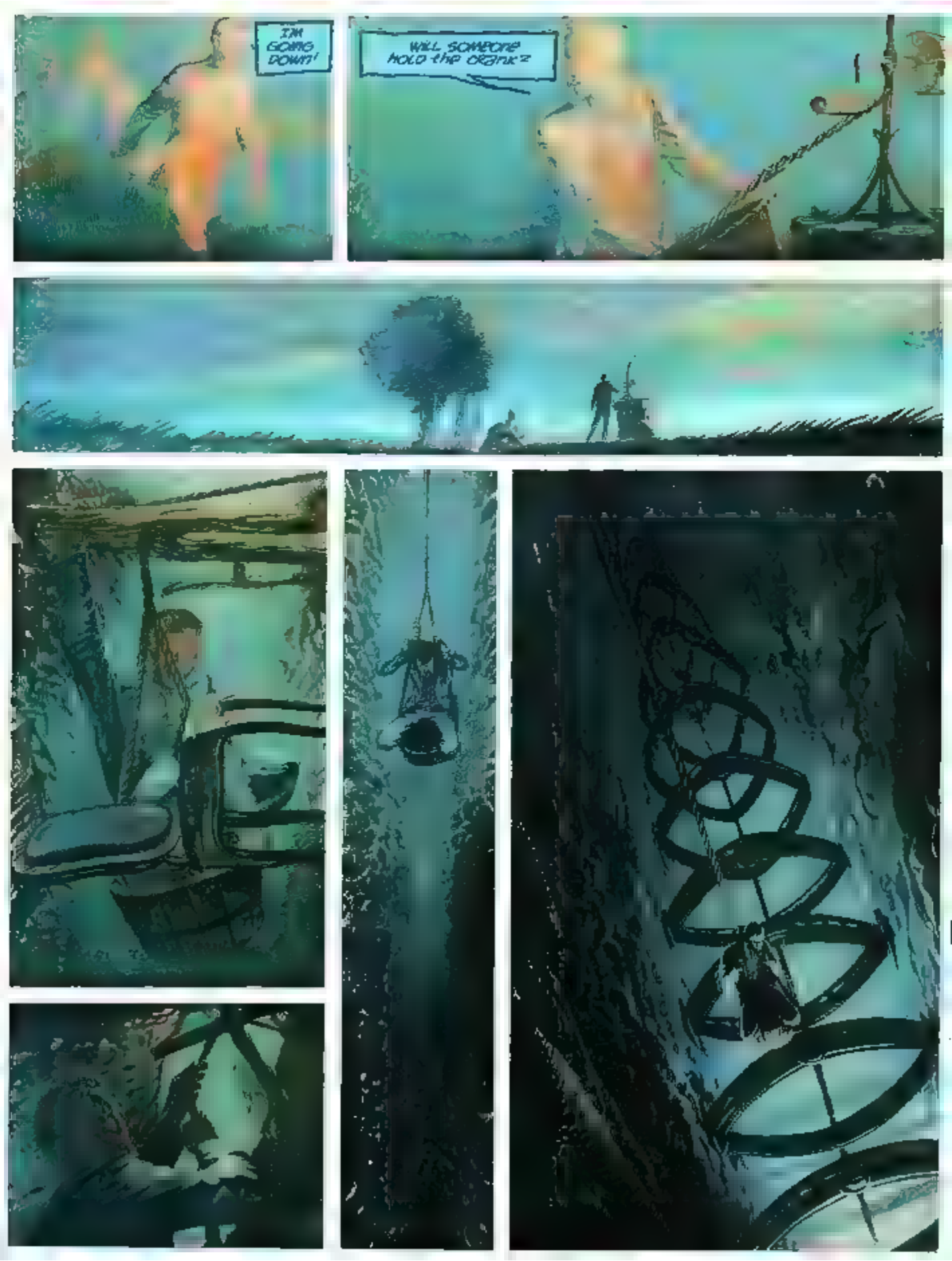


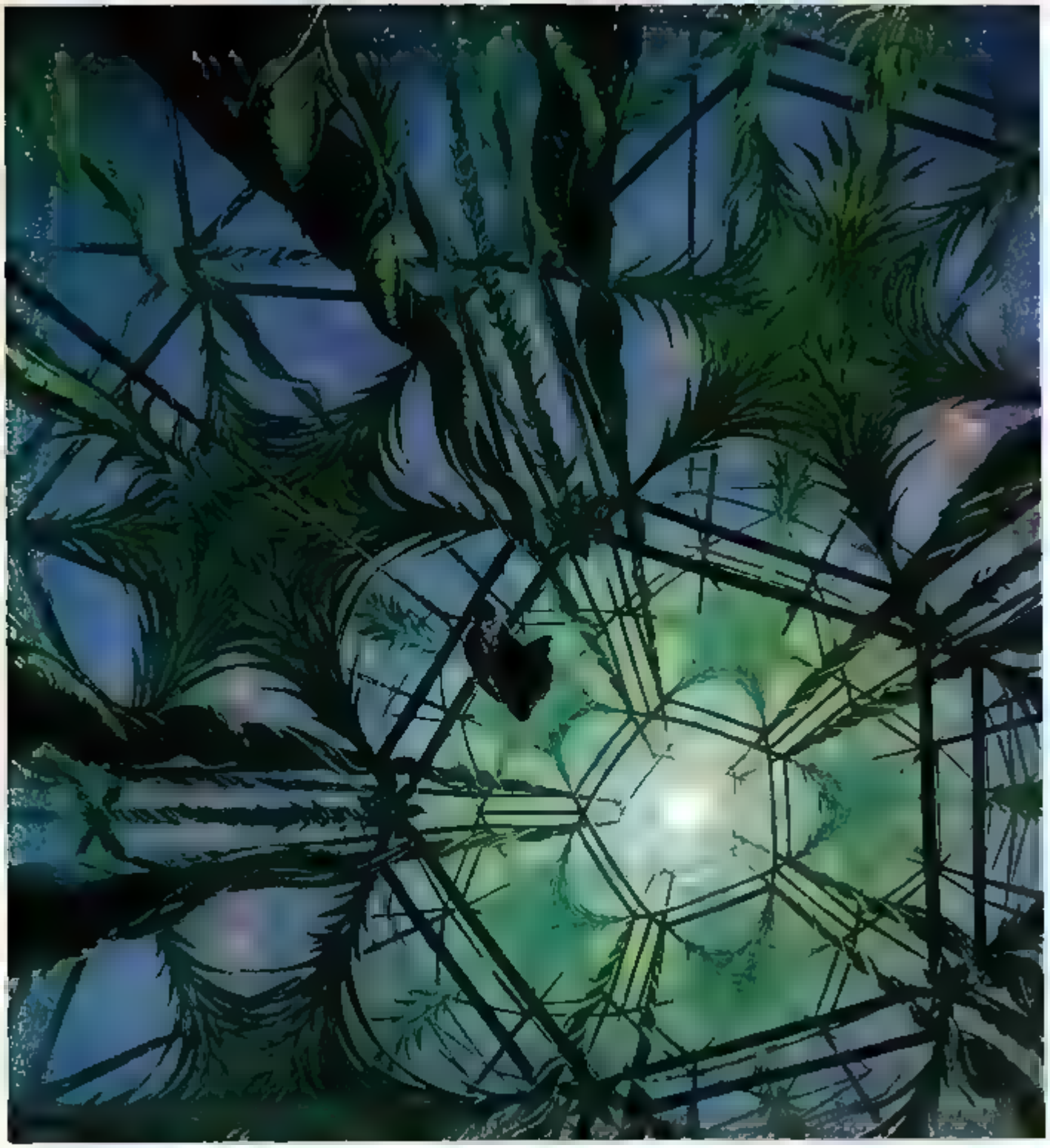
Jeannette!?

DON'T STAND THERE LIKE DUMMIES! WE MUST STOP THE CREVASSE FROM CLOSING
WHAT CAN WE DO?



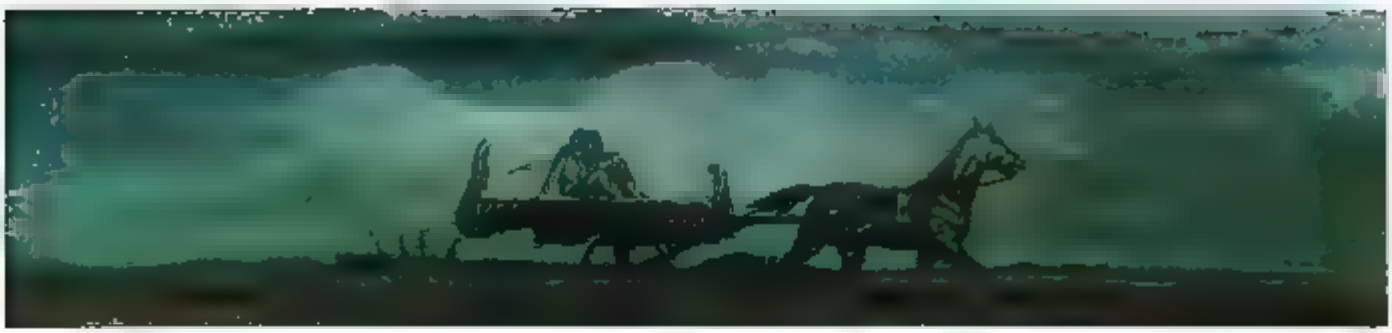
QUICKLY, QUICK...

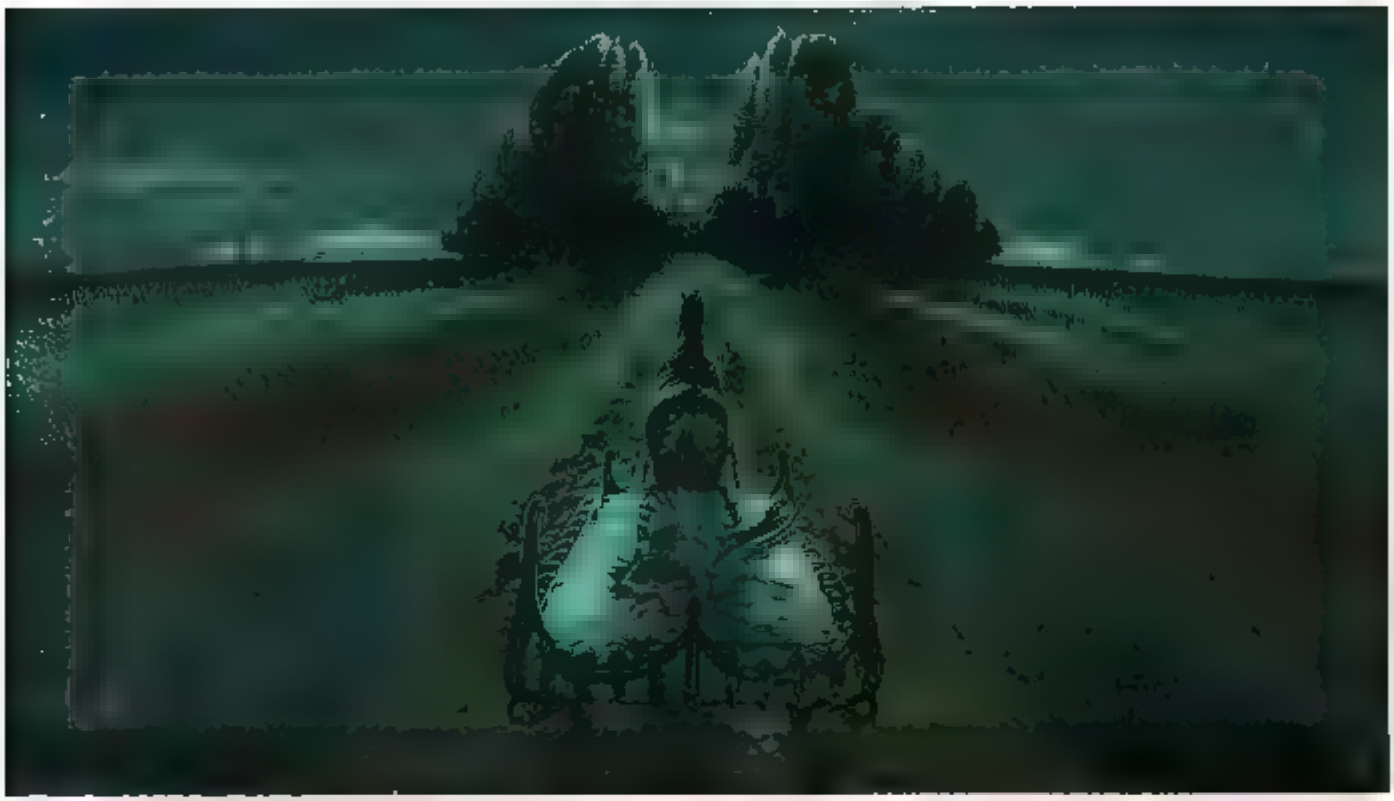

I'M GOING DOWN!
WILL SOMEONE HOLD THE CRANK?



I can't help you
Jeannette! I've got to get her untangled from this!
OOOHHH!
TO DO this on OUR wedding day. Why did he take you?

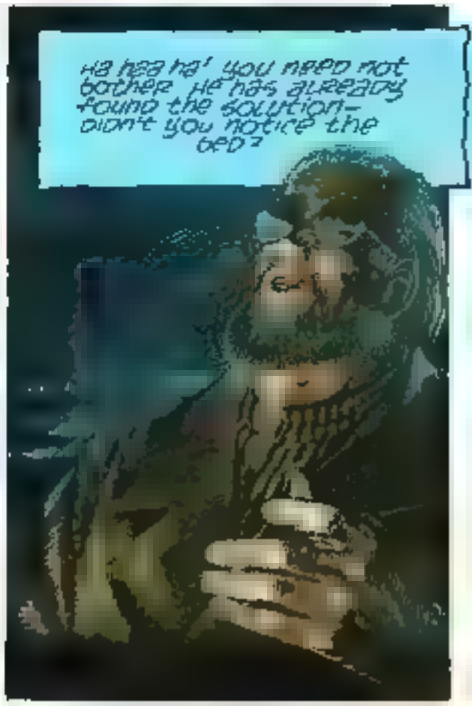
DON'T LET IT UPSET YOU LOOK, HE MADE US A GIFT
AND OH IT'S SO SOFT
I WISH HE'D GIVEN US NOTHING AND LEFT US IN PEACE I HOPE HE WILL RESTRAIN HIM SELF NOW
OH JULIEN HE DIDN'T REALLY DO ANYTHING THAT BAD TO US
JUST ANOTHER REMINDER OF I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER

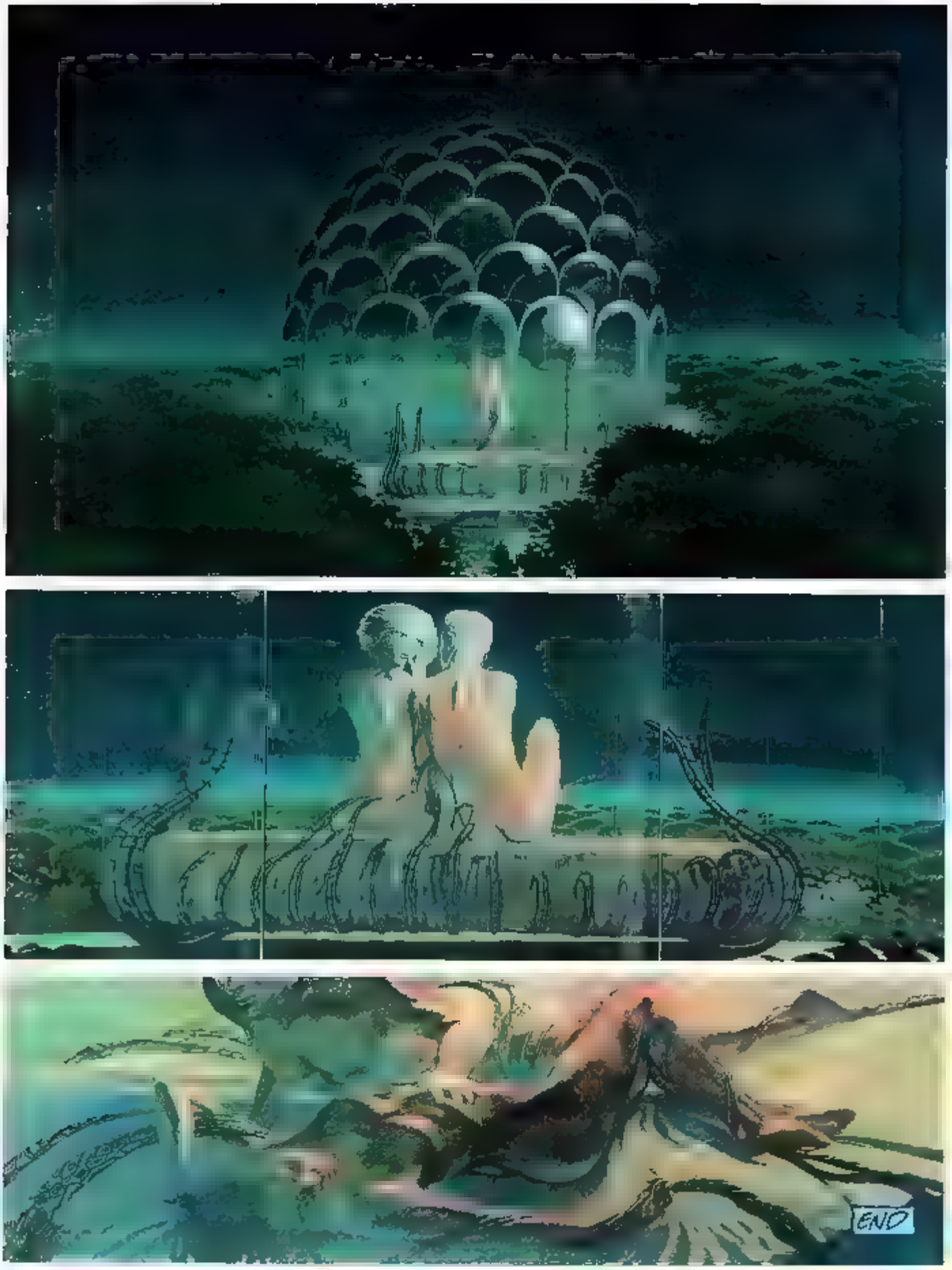




I think I understand his reaction he could not adapt to a life that lacked all contact with human passion he needed to touch

We must help him After all we live only for him He gives us our vital energy we must find a solution


Ha hea ha! you need not bother He has already found the solution- didn't you notice the bed?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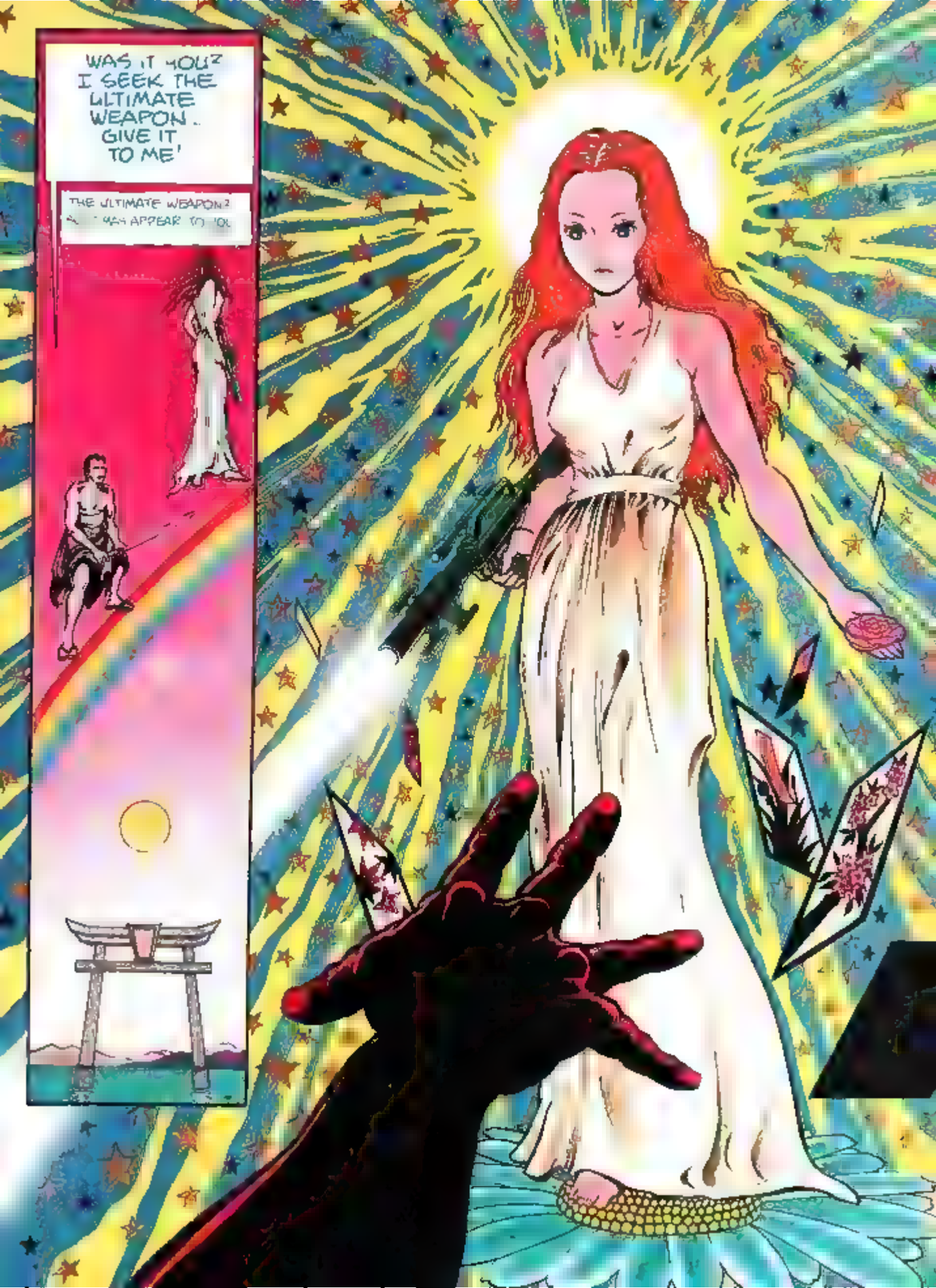
VIOLENCE BECOMES TRANQUILITY
VIOLENCE BECOMES TRANQUILITY
男は度胸
HE IS THE LEADER OF THE YAKUZA—INVINCIBLE THERE IS NO FUNERAL FOR A MAN WHO IS WITHOUT COURAGE
By Shinobu Kaze

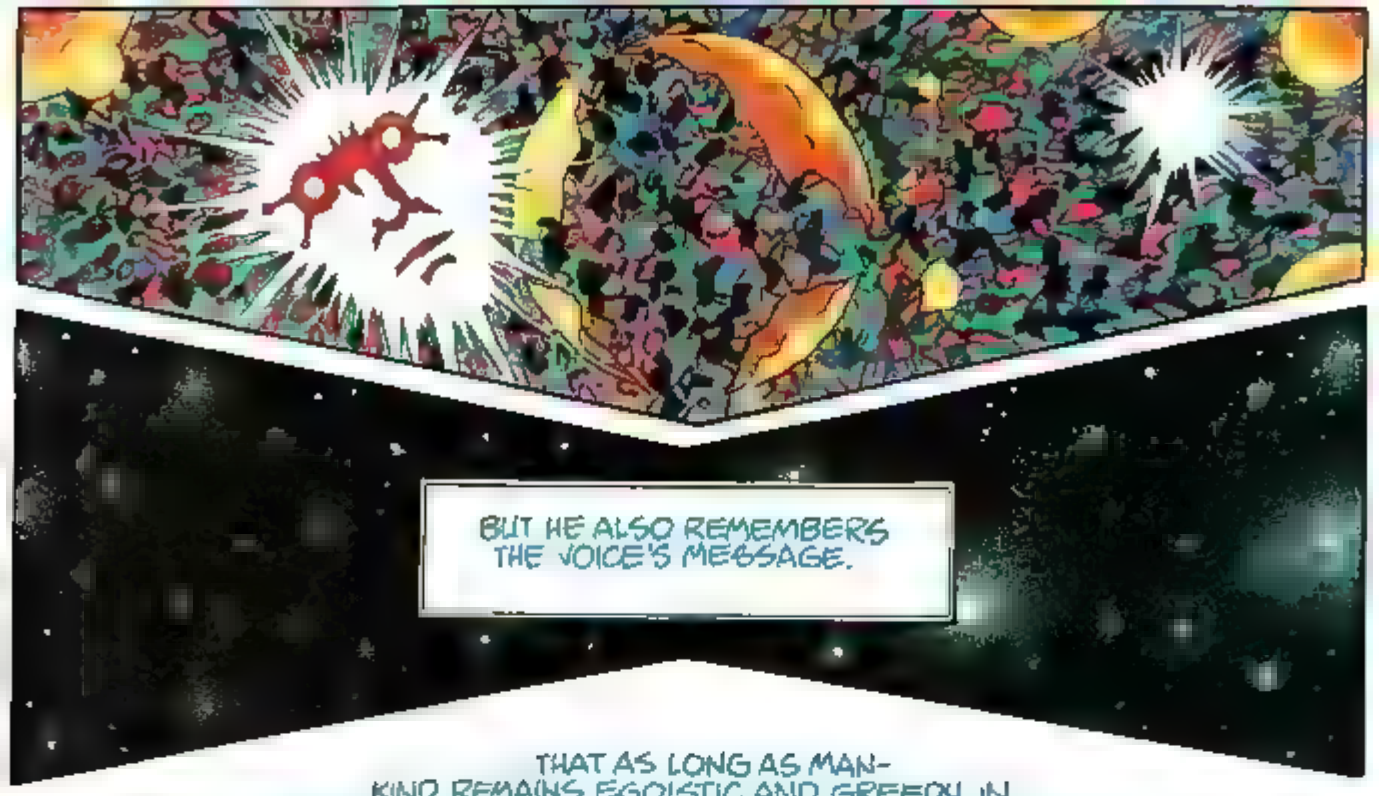
IN THIS MODERN AGE THE KATANA- THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE SWORD- IS NO LONGER SUFFICIENT IN ITSELF. HE HAS ARMED HIMSELF WITH THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE SPACE AGE. HE HAS CONQUERED HIS WORLD. HE NEED FEAR NOTHING
BUT YET HE FEELS INSECURE. HE REMAINS UNEASY. ONCE HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THERE EXISTED THE ULTIMATE WEAPON AND NOW HE MUST FIND IT. HE CHOOSES TO TAKE WITH HIM A GUITAR FOR THE JOURNEY

I MUST FIND REST FOR MY SOUL
THAT VOICE IN MY MIND! WHO...?
AN UNKNOWN VOICE ... HIS HEAD COMMAN... HIM TO ...


WAS IT YOU? I SEEK THE ULTIMATE WEAPON. GIVE IT TO ME!
THE ULTIMATE WEAPON? [illegible] APPEAR TO YOU

WHAT WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? MY SOUL, MY VERY SELF I AM LEAVING MY BODY !
THE ULTIMATE WEAPON ITS RAY SUMMONS ME I CANNOT FIGHT IT!

NOW MY SOUL HAS SEPARATED FROM MY BODY
I'VE NEVER BEFORE BEEN DEFEATED. BUT NOW I HAVE LOST
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME? IS THIS THE FINAL DEFEAT?
IMAGES COME TO HIM
IN WHICH HIS SWORD PIERCES AND DESTROYS THE WORLD



THAT AS LONG AS MANKIND REMAINS EGOISTIC AND GREEDY IN THOUGHT AND ACTION, THE BALANCE OF NATURE WILL BE OVERTURNED AND THE WORLD PLUNDERED AND DESTROYED.

IF I CAN ONLY GET THE ULTIMATE WEAPON THEN I WILL FEAR NOTHING!

I'VE RETURNED TO MY BODY!
IN THAT MOMENT HIS CONSCIOUSNESS WAS EXPANDED AND HE FELT THE VIBRATIONS OF THE UNIVERSE, SAW THE LIGHT OF REALITY. AT LAST, UNDERSTANDING WAS HIS

HIS JOURNEY IS OVER.
WHAT HE WAS SEEKING AND THIS TIME, WAS PEACE OF MIND

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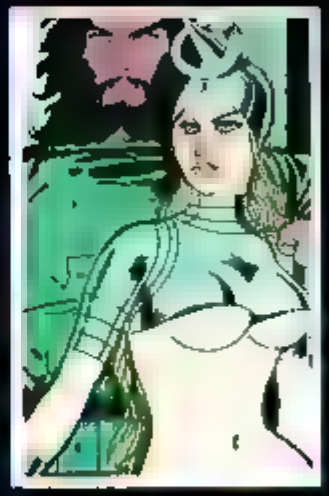

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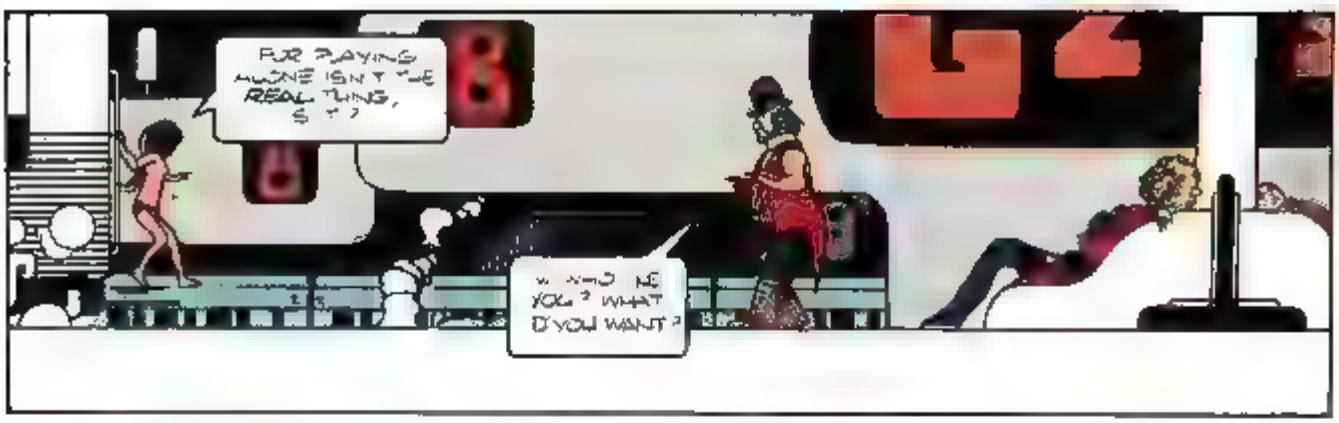
Total enclosed $_____

AMEN
by Dick Motena
GOD ,HICK ANY- MIGHTY
YE KIN SAY WHATEVER YE WANT 'BOUT THAT DAMN NEUTRON BOMB
I DON'T MAKE MUCH OF A MESS! EV'RYTHING IS STILL IN PERFEK' CONDITION. EXCEPT THEM PEOPLE O'COURSE
1

BUT THAT'S NO GREAT LOSS, ANYWAY
ALL FLESH PERISHES
AN THAT BRINGS DECAY !
BURP
SO A L'IL DROP TO PREVENT INFECTION WON T DO NO HARM !
THAT'S I' SAY ,
DECAY ?
TOO BAD-HIS SHE'S GONE N DONE HER , , OTHERWISE I'D MOST GRATEFULLY ACCEPT THE INV TA T ON
2

SHE CAN'T BE A CORPSE VERY LONG
B'SIDES, NOT A LIVIN' SOUL AROUN
AN AVING A BIT OF A FEEL AIN'T NO MORTAL SIN, AIN'T T?
HEY, GRAN' PA!
881
CAN I BE OF ANY HELP?
3


FOR PLAYING ALONE ISN'T THE REAL THING, S...?
W-WHO ARE YOU? WHAT D'YOU WANT?

ANYTHING YOU WANT, GRAND-PA.
BUT, I DON'T WANT

3
HEY! WATCH IT, OLD MAN
BEAT IT YOU ... SLUT!

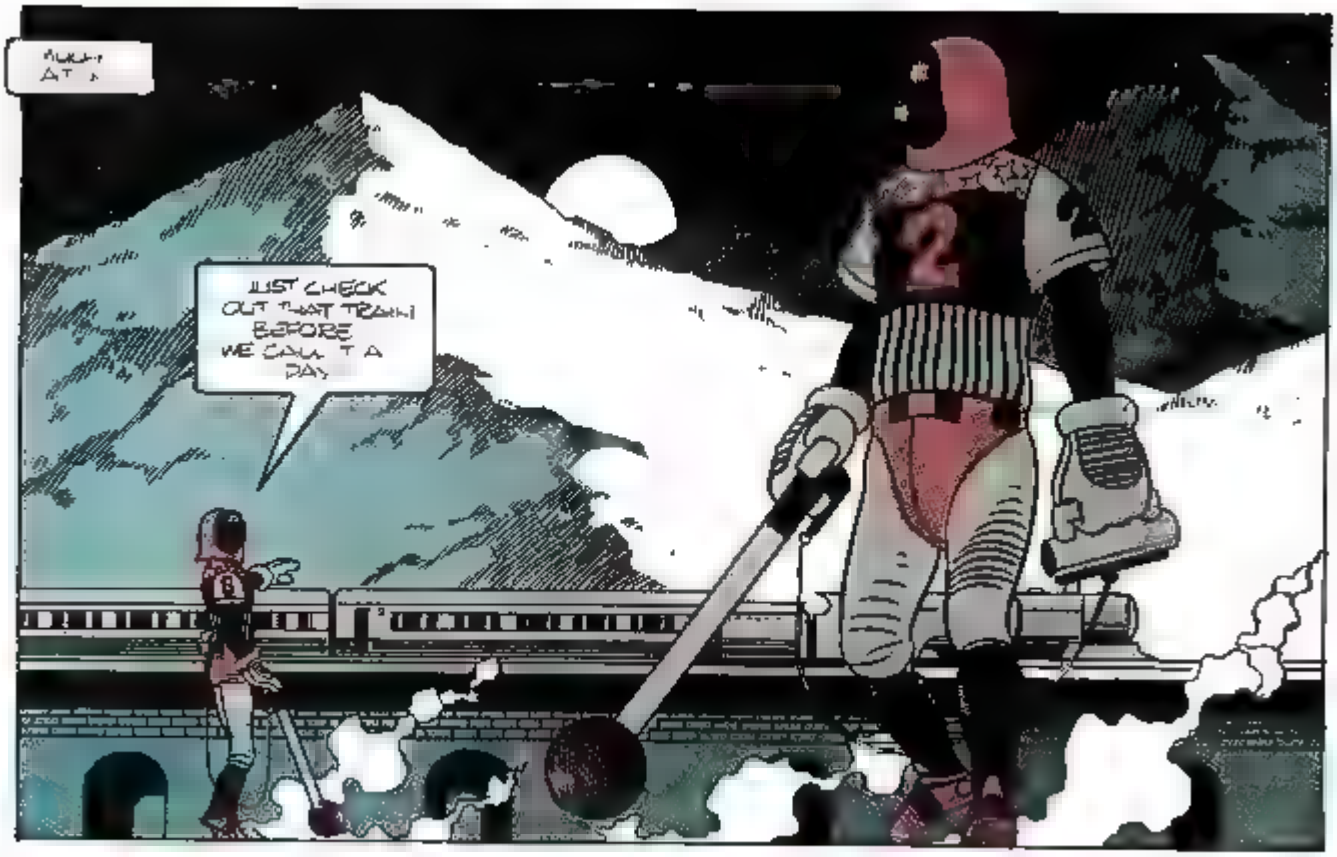
I WARNED YOU, DIDN'T I?
W-WHA- W-WHAT...?
POOR OLD GRAND-PA. KISS. KISS.
4

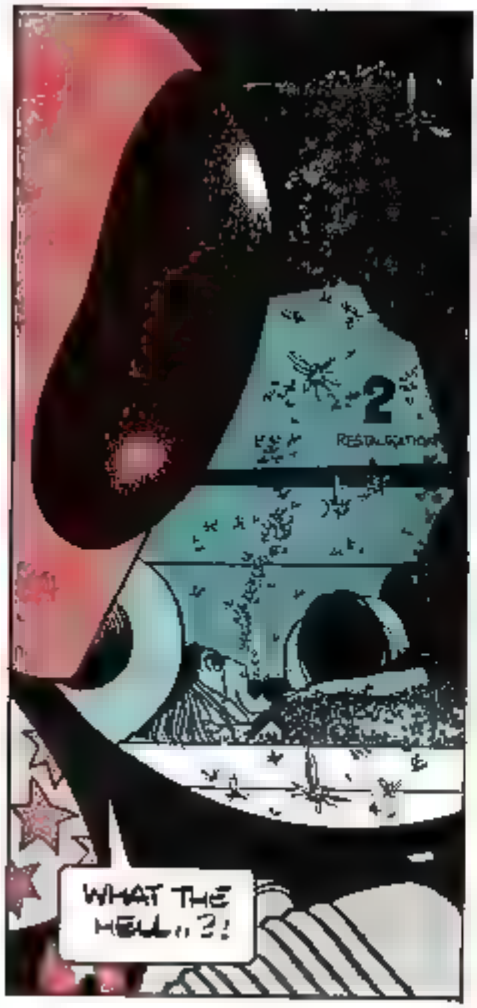
FLASH

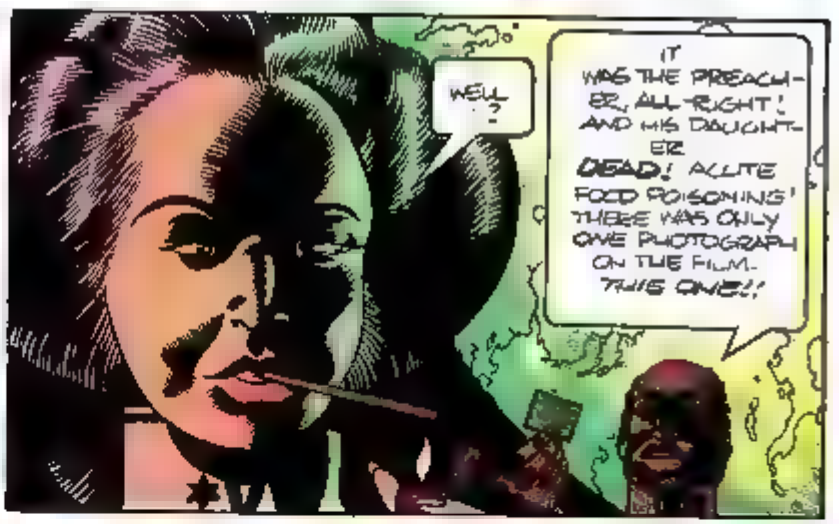
AND SNAP! ONCE AGAIN A SINNER CAUGHT RED-HANDED
JUST IN TIME DAD
YOU LASCIVIOUS OLD MAN WHEN YOU ASHAMED OF YOUR SELF?, ASSAULT NG A LITTLE GI- LKE THAT
BUT,
BEFORE I REALIZED WHAT HAPPENED, HE GRABBED ME, DAD
THE LORD HATES THOSE WHO ARE IN LEAGUE WITH THE EVIL ONE WORK, MY CHILD
BUT HE'LL LEAVE OFF FROM NOW ON! HE IS CAPTURED RIGHT HERE! IF HE YIELDS ONCE MORE TO TEMPTATION OF SATAN HE'S DONE FOR!!
5
GOOD GRACIOUS A DRINKING MAN, TOO! THE LORD WILL KNOW WHERE TO FIND HIM.
BOOZ !!! BEFORE I GO NUTS!
DIRTY OLD MAN!
CLICK
CLICK

HOW TERRIBLE IT WOULD BE IF HIS POOR WIFE SHOULD SEE THE PICTURE FATHER!
6
5
OURSE NOT - I'M NOT MARRIED BES JES EV'RYONE'S DEAD! CAUSE OF HE BOMBS
DO YOU HEAR THAT DAUGH-TER? BOMBS HE HAS SOWN ...
... PUNISH-MENT HE WILL REAP!
AND AFTERWARDS, FATHER, WILL IT BE AS USUAL?
OF COURSE, DEAR!
OH THANK YOU, DADDY! IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE WE HAD A DECENT MEAL!
TRUE! BUT, AS YOU SEE, THE LORD LOOKS AFTER HIS CHILDREN!
YES! BUT HE WILL STOP CARING IF WE LET THAT OLD FOOL RUN AWAY!
I AM THE INSTRUMENT OF THE LORD AND THROUGH MY HAND HIS WILL BE DONE.
2°C
6

BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM
BEHOLD THE NOXIOUS MATTER LEAVES HIS BODY. THUS HEAVEN PURIFIES. MY LORD!
REALLY DAD?
SO NOW WE CAN BLAM HIM?
JUST TO DUST AND ASHES TO ASHES. ALL IS ONE.
EVEN THIS OLD MAN WHO NOW GOES TO THE LORD BY WAY OF MY BODY WAS PART OF THE GREAT PLAN
IS THAT SO? I FEEL SICK ALL OF A SUDDEN
RESTAURA
IM-POSSIBLE THE OLD MAN WAS PURIFIED. HE DID SATAN JUST AS A DAD
OOOH MOTHER! DIE!
7


JUST CHECK OUT THAT TRAIN! BEFORE WE CALL IT A DAY

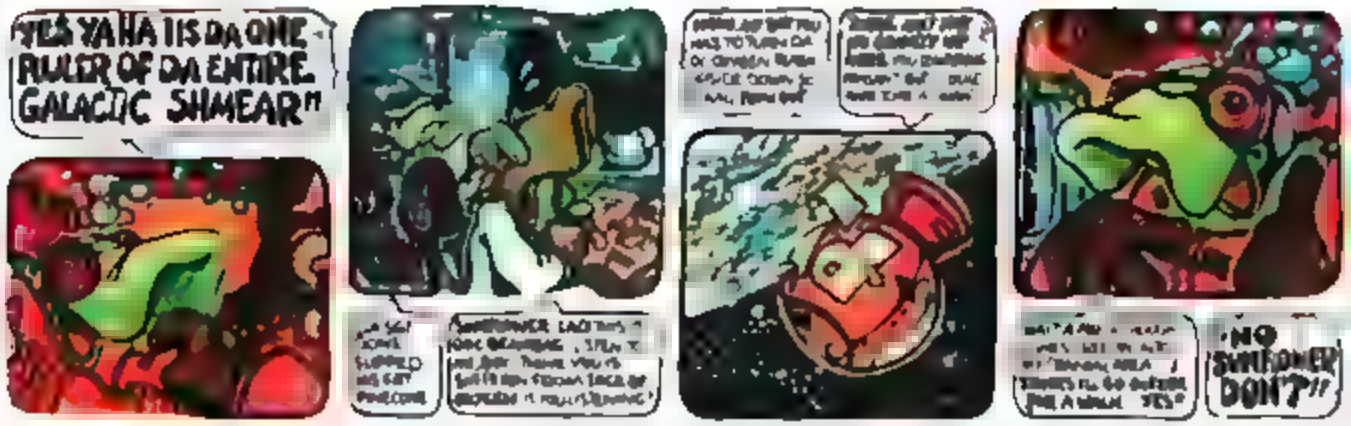

WHAT THE HELL..?!


WELL?
IT WAS THE PREACHER, ALL-RIGHT! AND HIS DAUGHTER DEAD! ALLITE FOOD POISONING! THERE WAS ONLY ONE PHOTOGRAPH ON THE FILM- THIS ONE!!

GOD!..

HELP US!
8

END



COMIX by Jay Kinney

(continued from page)

comic that satirized the genre.

S. Clay Wilson, whose pirate chanel chopping story in *Zap #2* had already upped the ante for no-holds-barred comic expression, was all for the idea. Don Donahue, publisher of *Zap #1*, was enlisted as printer and *Snatch*, the *only* high-grade sex comic was off and running.

However, it didn't run very far without getting into trouble. While *Snatch* started out as just another UG comic on sale in Bay Area stores next to the first *Zaps* and *Yellow Dogs*, it didn't remain that way for long. Moe's Books on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley was busted and owner Moe Moskowitz arrested for selling obscene literature. *Snatch* immediately disappeared from open display and according to some reports was being dealt illicitly on the street like grass or acid.

Was *Snatch* obscene? More to the point, what is obscenity? *Snatch* started out as a spoof on pornography — a collection of consciously dumb sex jokes. By the time of its third issue, a year later in 1969, it had conscientiously violated every sexual taboo the artists could think of. It was bitchen sexist before that word was even coined, and probably did more than any other single comic to earn the undergrounds their reputation as those dirty comics. But obscene? Somehow it all seemed too juvenile and jokey to deserve that label. (A Berkeley jury was to agree in 1970 at another *Snatch* trial when laughter won out over indignation at the *Snatch* antics.)

Talking with the cartoonists who were active at the time doesn't throw much light on the years of 68 and 69. Everyone was very stoned very often, and those years are just a blur for many artists. However some things do stand out from the period.

Crumb drew the Big Brother *Cheap Thrills* album cover during the summer of 68 while working on *Zap* and *Snatch*. John Thompson's first marriage broke up, and as fall arrived the freak-outs began. Joel Beck burned out on the intense East Bay drug scene and holed up in Point Richmond to do fantasy drawings for several years. "to keep from going totally insane," as he puts it. Andy Martin, an early star of *Yellow Dog*, freaked and quit cartooning. Don Schenker of the Print Mint freaked and took an extended vacation from publishing.

Come November, Nixon was elected and the Family Dog went bankrupt. The Family Dog, headed by Chet Helms, had produced the weekly Avalon dances and had been Bill Graham's main competition. Chet was a mid-1960s immigrant from Texas and part of a crowd of Texans who formed an almost ethnic community within San Francisco. ("Look, Henry! There are the Chinese, the Japanese, the Chicanos, the Italians, and the *Texas hippies*!" "The whaaat?")

Jaxon, creator of the seminal *God Nose* comics and Fred Todd, future president of Rip Off Press, were among those who moved to San Francisco from Austin, Texas, in 1966. After an unexciting stretch as an accountant for a clothing store downtown, Jaxon became the art director for the Family Dog, coordinating posters for the dances each week through 1967.

By 68, the decline had set in. The Haight was succumbing to speed and violence ("a total freak circus," as Crumb describes it) and the rock poster sideline was faltering. Everyone's walls were already filled up, money was tight, and the Family Dog had to go back to cheaper black and white printing for posters. Jaxon quit as art director and took off for Hawaii. When he returned in late 68, the UG comix were on the upsurge (despite freak-outs) and Jaxon drove down to Austin, returning to San Francisco with Gilbert Shelton and a trunkful of Gilbert's *Feds 'n' Heads Comics*.

Gilbert arranged for the Print Mint to handle distribution and reprinting of the title and then turned to a new project: an underground comic for the Students for a Democratic Society. SDS at that time was at its peak, a radical student organization of tens of thousands opposing the Vietnam War and raising hell on campuses across the US.

Paul Buhle, editor of the SDS magazine *Radical America*, had seen *Feds 'n' Heads*, liked what he saw, and started including the comic on SDS literature tables at the University of Wisconsin. Contacting Gilbert, he proposed a special issue of *Radical America* done as an underground comic. Gilbert agreed, edited the zine (*Radical America Komiks*), and gathered together work by Jaxon, Lynch, Williamson, Wilson, Frank Stack, and others. Shelton himself contributed the most political strip in the book, the eleven-page "Smiling Sergeant Death and His Merciless Mayhem Patrol," a hilarious satire of the Marvel Comics jingo Sgt. Fury.

The comic was distributed both through normal UG comic channels as well as SDS chapters, eventually selling thirty thousand copies — an impressive contrast to *Radical America*'s usual five thousand copy circulation.

While *RA Komiks* was in the works, Gilbert and his Texan friends had another idea. Why not start a publishing company run by the artists so that the artists could *rip off* more of the profits from comix for themselves? In March 1969, Rip Off Press was founded by Jaxon, Gilbert, Fred Todd, and Dave Moriarty, a Texan on the staff of the UG paper the *SF Express-Times*. The four each put in one hundred dollars to buy a 1948 Davidson Multilith press, and printed the color covers of *RA Komiks* as one of their first jobs.

After finishing the Big Brother LP art, Robert Crumb took off for points east. As mentioned last column, Crumb was in Chicago during August 1968, where he helped Jay Lynch and Skip Williamson with *Bijou Funnies #1*. Then it was on to New York and into the open arms of the crowd at the *East Village Other*, where he drew covers and strips during his two or three month stay. Like the Haight, the scene in the East Village was degenerating as speed and smack made their marks. *EVO* continued to attract a lot of unconventional talent, however, and various cartoonists (Spain, Deitch, and less often, Trina) began appearing in its pages.

There was Willy Murphy, a dropout from Madison Avenue (Ted Bates and J. Walter Thompson), who found he preferred drawing comix and *satirizing* ads to having to create them.

There was Roger Brand, a childhood

buddy of Joel Beck s from the Bay Area who learned his sk lls as a cartoonist assisting Wally Wood and Gil Kane Roger's strip, The Adventures of Strawbrick, was serialized in *EVO*, puzzling everyone with its Freudian dreamlike story line

There was Art Spiegelman, like Lynch and Williamson a former Satire Fan now a bit messianic with LSD enthusiasm. An anonymous comic leaflet by Art (Play with your cells and become your own food!") had been reprinted widely in the UG press, and *EVO* ran Art's first *official* UG strip the gaga exploits of Jolly Jack Jackoff

And there was Vaughn Bode the Cartoon Messiah himself probably the most controversial figure to come out of UG comix and certainly one of the least understood

An on-again-off-again student at Syracuse University throughout the latter half of the sixties, Bode was a creator of detailed fantasy universes. In fact, he had filing cabinets full of intricately worked out alien planets and future worlds, complete with model sheets of weaponry maps and character studies

Vaughn hit New York City with six-guns blazing in '68-'69 He had already been illustrating for *Galaxy Science Fiction* and now he blitzed in quick succession *EVO* Douglas Records, and *Cavalier Cavalier* at that time was trying hard to be *the* hip men s magazine and had run episodes of Crumb's Fritz the Cat" during most of 1968 In due time, Bode became *Cavalier*'s resident UG cartoonist turning in two to four pages of strips on a monthly schedule up until his untimely death in 1975

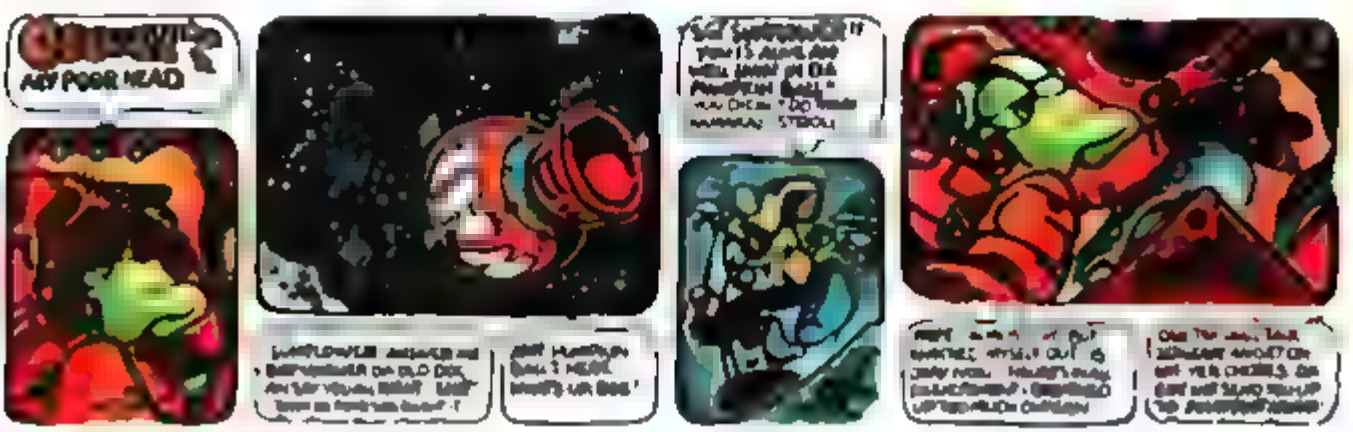
With UG comix multiplying in the rest of the country, there was, in early '69 much talk among the *EVO* cartoonists about publishing a New York comic Crumb was in town on an extended visit, John Thompson had moved there for a spell and both supported the notion Various names were thrown around, variations on *Jive Comics* in particular but somehow when the smoke had cleared, the project had become a monthly comic tabloid named *Gothic Blimp Works* with Vaughn Bode as editor

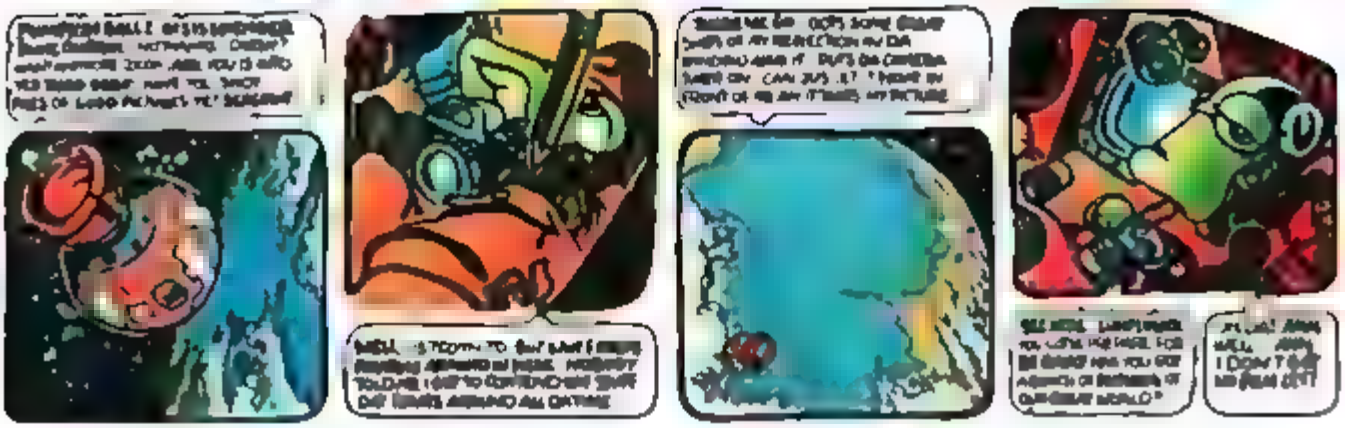
GBW was probably doomed to fail from the start. Though it presented an intriguing selection of strips from all of the important UG cartoonists it never got very good distribution. *GBW #1* came out in March 969 right in the midst of the NY sex-paper war for newsstand space *Screw*, *Pleasure*, *New York Review of Sex & Politics* *EVO*'s own *Kiss*, and a dozen other sheetsheets were falling all over each other trying to corner the market on newsprint ranch Display space was at a premium and unavailable for poor sellers. *GBW* went two issues under Bode's editorship and another five with Ken Deitch at the helm A final lame duck issue appeared in the fall of '69 and that was that

What success the UG s have had over the years has been in large part due to their long shelf life ' Unlike most magazines the comix have no set publishing schedule — and thus no need to sell their print run by next Thursday With months (or years) to grab readers, the UGs can go through six printings of popular titles (just like paperbacks) and enjoy slow but steady sales *GBW* had no such advantage with its monthly schedule and suffered for it. The artists liked the roominess of the large tabloid pages and the luxury of eight color pages in each issue but the paper failed to find a solid audience These days, old *Gothic Blimps* are among the rarer collector s items sought by UG fans

While *GBW* was struggling along, things had been going quite well for Crumb and the other *Zap* artists Crumb, Wilson, Moscoso, and Griffin had had a show of original comic art at the Light Sound Dimension Gallery in San Francisco following *Zap #2* s appearance *Life* magazine had been following Crumb around during his New York visit intending to do an article on him But most significantly Crown published a collection of Crumb s early UG work (including most of *Zap #1*) entitled *Head Comix* which was followed in the spring of '69 by Ballantine s oversize collection of his *Fritz the Cat* strips

Crumb found it hard to deal with New York publishers and subsequently coined them *en masse* as "sharpies" to be avoided at all cost but this was only after fame had visited him. Ad agencies, ever attentive to new graphic fads, sought Crumb's services to aid in selling products to the booming youth market When Crumb proved uncooperative, the agencies simply hired others to imitate his goofy big-footed style. In little more than the space of a year, Crumb found himself a cult figure — a mind-boggling situation for someone who was essentially shy and retiring





Crumb's response to this seemed to be to travel and draw a lot. He crisscrossed the country, crashing with friends and working on new comix. During a visit to Detroit in early '69 he drew up *Motor City Comics*, one of his all time best. *Despair Big Ass* the books seemed to pour out, and the Print Mint and Rip Off were only too glad to publish them. The UG publishers were essentially family operations, familiar and unthreatening, and as the years went by, they and other small alternative outfits like them were to print the vast majority of Crumb's work.

However, what was familiar and close at hand for Crumb and the Bay Area artists was not necessarily the case for cartoonists elsewhere. Jay Lynch in Chicago had arranged for the Print Mint to take over printing and distributing *Bijou Funnies*. *Bijou* under Lynch's editorship was the best anthology comic in the budding field and the cornerstone of what Lynch playfully named the Bijou Publishing Empire, Inc.

According to Empire plans, Lynch and Skip Williamson would publish *Bijou* but the Print Mint would do the actual printing and distribution. However, communication between the Bijou Empire and the Print Mint was poor, and Lynch came to suspect that they were being gypped. No real evidence ever surfaced, but paranoia tends to grow in proportion to distance, and the miles between Chicago and Berkeley made it hard to check the Print Mint's ledgers. Ultimately caution won out, and in 1970, after four issues, *Bijou* left the Print Mint's fold for a new distributor in Milwaukee, Kitchen Sink.

Kitchen Sink was the brainchild of cartoonist Denis Kitchen. Soon after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1968, Kitchen had come across a copy of *Bijou* #1 in a Milwaukee bookstore. The UG virus struck, and Denis decided to draw and publish his own comic, *Mom's Homemade Comics*, under the Kitchen Sink Enterprises logo.

Mom's was self-described on the cover as "bold, blustering tales of stark passion, featuring the vitriolic, belly-splotting humor of Denis Kitchen," though on close inspection the main thrust of the comix inside seemed to be horrific puns.

Kitchen's drawing style was cartoony in the three-fingered *Little Lulu* tradition and *Mom's* will probably go down in history as one of the corniest and cleanest undergrounds ever. As such it was unique, and the Print Mint soon added it to their line by taking over reprinting and distribution.

Encouraged, Kitchen produced *Mom's* #2 for the Print Mint in 1969 ended and then began having communication difficulties of his own. Clearly there was some jinx (at the very least) on comic business relations between the West Coast and the Midwest. Kitchen decided to solve the problem by starting his own publishing and distribution company in Milwaukee.

Thus by the end of 1969 what had begun the previous year as a loose network of self-publishing cartoonists had now become a mini-industry complete with three or four publishers devoting their full attention to disseminating underground comix.

The original countercultural enclaves in the Haight and East Village were on the wane, but the activities and styles they had engendered were spreading far and wide. Underground comix (or Head Comics as they were often called following the publication of Crumb's paperback collection) were pulled along in the flood — developing a whole set of associations that were initially the key to the comix' success, yet eventually a trap as well. The story of the UGs in the seventies is in large part a tale of the cartoonists working to maintain their creativity in the face of their audience's expectations.

New Publications

Comanche Moon by Jack Jackson (published jointly by Rip Off Press, Inc. and Last Gasp, 1979) is possibly the most impressive solo work to come out of UG comix since Justin Green's autobiographical tour de force *Binky Brown Meets the Holy Virgin Mary*. This 128-page, 8-by-11-inch paperback brings together Jaxon's trilogy of UG comix (*White Comanche*, *Red Raider* and *Bland on the Moon*), along with added story material and historical photos. The result is a handsome book that skillfully uses comic art to tell a compelling (and true) tale.

Comanche Moon follows the life of Cynthia Ann Parker, a white settler child captured by the Comanches in Texas in 1836. Raised as a Comanche, she bears a son, Quanah, who becomes the last war chief of the embattled tribe. The story of mother and son spans over seventy years and presents a close look at the tragic wars between white man and native American. Utilizing the pair as a personal point of reference, Jaxon turns what could have been a dry historical tome into a vivid adventure story filled with sympathetically treated characters.

Jaxon's art is superb, both a tribute to and extension of the work of western artists like Russell, Von Schmidt, and Remington. The general approach of the story parallels the classic realism of the old Kurtzman *Two Fisted Tales* for EC, with unobtrusive narrative and a clear linear flow of panels.

This project took Jaxon over three years of research and drawing, and it shows. The pages nearly overflow with authentic details of Indian and Texan life, that contribute to the overall impact of the tale.

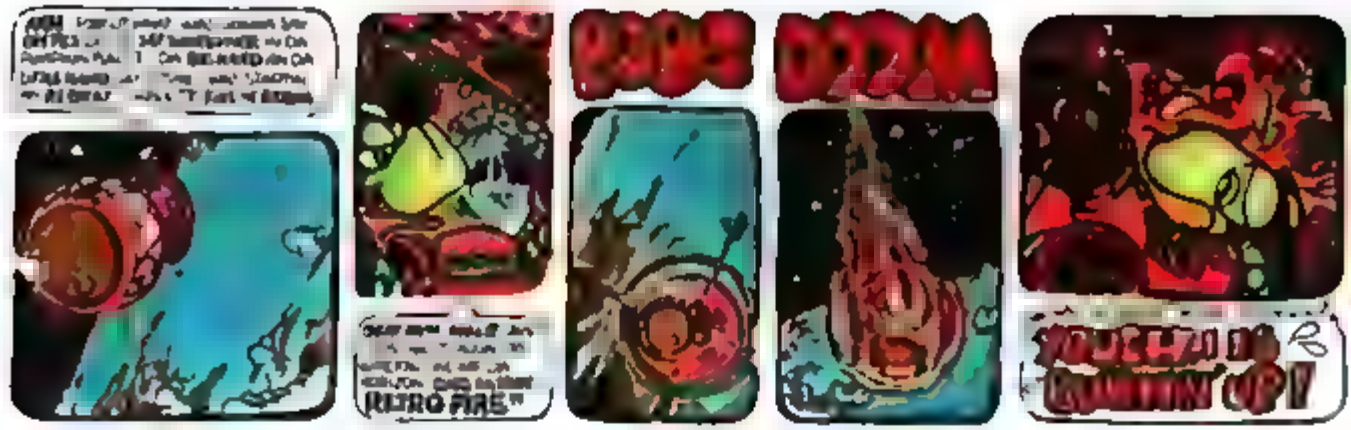
Works such as this (and Larry Gonick's ongoing *Cartoon History of the Universe*, published by ROP) expand the breadth of not only underground comix but of comic art as a whole. And what a mixed they're fun to read.

(*Comanche Moon* retails for $6.95 in bookstores, or is available for $7.50 postpaid from Rip Off Press, Inc., Box 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114 *or* Last Gasp, 2180 Bryant Street, San Francisco, CA 94110.)

The fourth issue of *American Splendor*, Harvey Pekar's idiosyncratic comic, has recently come out. Pekar, who writes all the stories in the comic, specializes in "depressing stories" from his humdrum life in Cleveland. One can hardly imagine a *less* commercial notion for a comic, which is no doubt at least part of the reason why Harvey has been able to enlist Robert Crumb to illustrate many of the strips. 27 pages worth, to be exact. Gary Dumm, Gerry Shamray and Michael T. Gilbert draw the remaining Pekar stories.

Harvey has a very dry sense of humor along with a good ear for dialogue, and even if you could not care less about normal life among working stiffs in Cleveland, Pekar has a way of dramatizing the mundane that often approaches the profound.

American Splendor #4 is a fat 60-page comic well worth the $2.00 cover price. (*AS* is available for $2.25 postpaid from Last Gasp, see address above.) ●



MUZICK by Lou Stathis

Carroll John Daly) Other popular art forms have themselves experienced this—the New Waves of SF and film in the sixties, for instance, were the rumblings of this sort of reorientation Old Mr Eno has served his time as both innovator and adapter (yes, him again—is it my fault the little wimp fits in so fucking well, with everything I say?) while Bowie has taken on avant-garde influences with all the eagerness of a nymphomaniac invited to a gang bang

What it comes down to is a blending of the head and the gut, and far too often this synthesis dissatisfies or disappoints the purists on both sides. Too cerebral for the gut responders, and too vulgar for the intellectuals

This nebulous interregion is where bands like Ultravox—who are a compelling if sometimes disjointed, fusion of the avant garde and pure savage rok—get lost and ultimately ignored. It's my feeling (one not apparently shared by many) that Ultravox along with a very few other bands, make essential muzick for the 1980s. There is a powerful and resonant blend of audio technology the futurist vision, and some of that lewd, pulsating rhythm" we all know and love It is the sound of the times, but ironically their timing couldn't have been worse Their first album was released at a time when pretentious lyrics and deviant song structures were looked upon with disgust by all but a few The three LPs they've released so far are uniformly excellent each with moments of striking brilliance and each a major advance and departure from the preceding one. Yet they've been treated with contemptuous indifference by their record company both here and back home in Limey and Lester Bangs a good writer and occasionally one of the USA's better rok critics called Ultravox a band too fundamentally uninteresting for anybody to save' (in a hagiography of Eno in a recent issue of *Musician, Player & Listener*) The British press has consistently dumped on them calling the first album sterile the second pretentious and derivative and the third shallow and coldly unemotional

Well fuck all those assholes And when they die, I hope they discover that Hell is a small room filled with the sounds from an eternal tape loop of the Clash. Serve the bastards right I for one will continue to be happy as long as there are bands like Ultravox playing what they damn well please

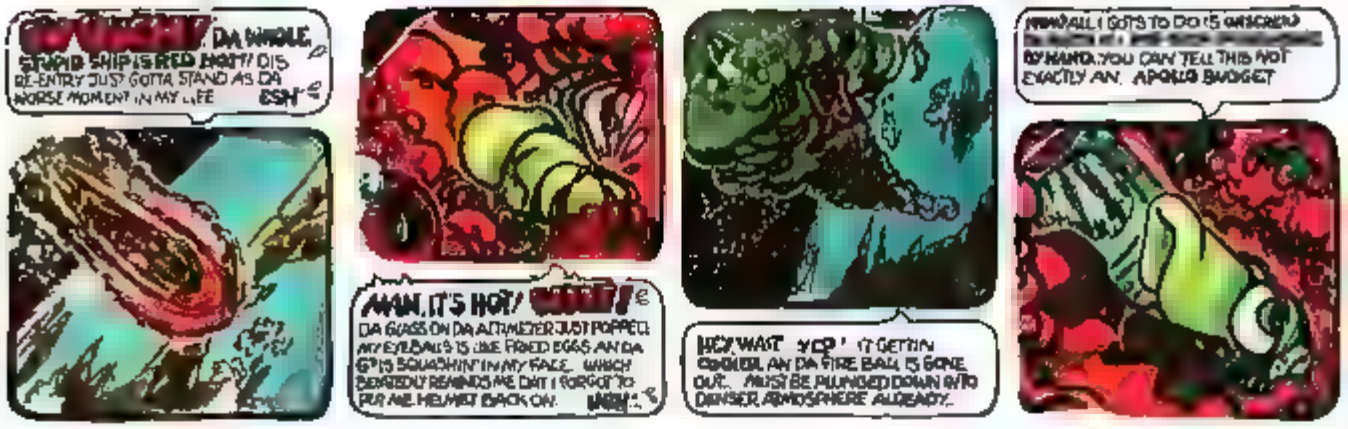
The first album, called just *Ultravox!* (the exclamation point was a part of the band's name for the first two albums only) was released on both sides of the Atlantic by Island Records (the cover can be seen at the head of this column. It was the winter of '77 a time of retrenchment and ferment in rok Progressivism was on the wane Island was backing people like John Cale and Kevin Ayers from their roster, Roxy Music was functionally dead and David Bowie was shuffling off to Philadelphia to apply for the job of Harold Melvin's albino twin brother On the plus side, dingy New York City joints like CBGB and Max's were brightened by the appearance of Television Talking Heads Ramones, and the Heartbreakers while in London, the Sex Pistols were ferociously ripping the shit out of everything in sight The British press had caught punk fever and it had little patience for anything else The advent of the Pistols had made anything and everything else irrelevant I probably would've missed that first Ultravox! album entirely had I not searched it out, considering how invisible it was. All needed to know was that Eno had produced it and of course everything with his pudgy) little fingerprints on it was required listening Achtung!

At first it didn't grab me But that was no sweat; Genesis albums had done the same thing to me one after another I had to give them time to hook themselves to me somewhere and begin to grow At least Ultravox's tooms were catchy, and the band rocked pretty damn good So I kept on listening, and pretty soon—within a couple of weeks—I was slapping it on the turntable every day often several times It had something, and it was beginning to go to work on me

The album opens with 'Sunday Night in the City of the Dead.' It's a real thumper one of those songs that somehow makes your legs twitch rhythmically without your head being able to control them. Winding itself around the beat, looping and jabbing, is a clean, hard-muscled bass line Drummer Warren Cann and bassist Chris Cross are an agile, propulsive rhythm section I would compare Cann's consistent surehandedness and assertiveness favorably with that of Roxy Music's Paul Thompson, one of rok's most ruthlessly efficient drummers. The album's mix (Eno's?) is exceptionally clean but leans heavily toward the bottom end—the rhythm section giving the more straight-ahead rok numbers like 'Sunday 'Life at Rainbow's End' 'Wide Boys,' and 'The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned'' an open but punchy sound. Much of the melody is carried by Cross's bass, with Billy Currie's keyboards, and Stevie Shears's guitar used almost as rhythmic or textural reinforcement It is an oddly arresting sparse sound subdued yet powerful—in direct opposition to the sound wall power chording favored by the punk bands of the time, like the Pistols and the Damned It works beautifully I think The album moves along energetically carried by the beat and supported by the haunting melodies of the songs

Riding atop it all is John Foxx whose voice commands the album, and whose vision of an apocalyptic alienation leads the way as well (at least I presume it's mostly his vision—he's clearly the major songwriter on the album and his likeness, kneeling with hands clasped before an array of video screens dominates the back of the album jacket) Foxx's voice, with its frozen acidity owes much to space cadet era Bowie as does the band's voice as a whole But Foxx and Ultravox' brings more conviction to the sound than Bowie ever did Bowie always seemed more a cipher to me, a vehicle through which the ideas of others were filtered an actor before he was a creator With Ultravox while they certainly borrow, the feeling of authenticity of belief is forced through the speakers at you. Their antecedents are a varied lot From what I can figure out, they take much from the sixties French cinema (Godard references abound). British New Wave SF (J.G. Ballard in particular) and what we could call the Cold Front of the European electronic muzick avant garde (mostly krauts outfits like Cluster, Neu and Faust with perhaps a touch of the prog like Richard Pinhas and Heldon And, of course, good old Eno

The trick seems to be for the most part


DA WHOLE STUPID SHIP IS RED HOT!! DIS RE-ENTRY JUST GOTTA STAND AS DA WORSE MOMENT IN MY LIFE ESH!
MAN, IT'S HOT! EEEEK!
DA GLASS ON DA ALTIMETER JUST POPPED! MY EYEBALLS IS LIKE FRIED EGGS AN DA S**T IS SQUASHIN' IN MY FACE... WHICH DERECTLY REMINDS ME DAT I FORGOT TO PUT ME HELMET BACK ON. UHH!
HEY WAIT YO! IT GETTIN COOLER, AN DA FIRE BALL IS GONE OUT... MUST BE PLUNGED DOWN INTO DENSER ATMOSPHERE ALREADY.
NOW ALL I GOTS TO DO IS SURVIVE!
BY HANDS YOU CAN TELL THIS NOT EXACTLY AN APOLLO BUDGET

nonnarrative. Taken out of context they don't make a hell of a lot of sense. It's obvious that they don't tell a story, something rok lyrics are usually expected to do. I suspect they are intended to fit into the songs as phrase sounds (an Eno technique), and also as afterimages that linger in the mind. In "The Wild, the Beautiful . . ," the process is described this way: "To petrify more images to dangle just outside your reach." There is a definite filmic sense to the visualization and presentation of the images. There is a fleeting quality to them, they are moved past us like a slide show seen from a moving train, or like a disjointed film composed of still photographs (like Chris Marker's 1962 *La Jetee*) or even one of Ballard's condensed novels. They might lack conventional structure, but they certainly aren't without unity or cumulative impact. A rok song's value has always been determined (in my mind, at least) independent of the lyric's interpretation. Rok is a catalytic muzickal-chemical event triggered in the listener by a song's *sound*. This sound might include the human voice, and that voice might be using words. The words might be "The bird bird bird, the bird's the word," or they might be:

I awoke this morning suffering great existential angst due to the departure of my female companion. I don't care, as long as my intelligence or taste isn't insulted, and as long as there are human feelings at work. If there is consistency of vision, some sort of intellectual achievement, so much the better. And the vision—the *feeling*—that comes through Ultravox!'s songs is certainly consistent, though damn grim (and perhaps humorless). I am reminded of the way Pete Sinfield's imagistic lyrics matched the muzick in great King Crimson songs such as "21st Century Schizoid Man," "In the Wake of Poseidon" and "Islands." Three songs miles apart in feel, but each a perfectly melded and integrated muzickal statement. Ultravox!'s purpose might be more single-minded, but their songs are no less crafted or effective. We are left with feelings of a savage, *Clockwork Orange*-like code of violence and amorality and glimpses of the same sort of street-punk-in-a-crumbling-world ethic as in the Kubrick film. There is anonymous, mechanical sex, the inability to communicate real feelings, a strangely serene and passive acceptance of unreasoning death, the need for sensation as a life-giving substance, and also as a mind-numbing drug, the drive for survival in the midst of an uncontrollable apocalypse. All smiles, these guys, eh?

Let me pull out some of the lyrics for you and set them down. I don't normally like to do this, but this time I think they're good enough to withstand the surgical removal unharmed. From, once again, "The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned," we have this charming sequence:

Break my legs politely
I'll spit my gold teeth out at you.
Your sores are almost big enough to
step right inside

And from "Slip Away":

All things fall from me.
The vaults and the veils.
All things flow by me
My sorrows have sails.
Were you speaking,
Or did I say?
The frontiers have fallen.
It's time to be slipping away
as you call me,
My hands they fall open.
My mouth it is frozen.
The chrysalis crumbles.
I'm falling.
Slow motion.
Dissolve.

Which is about as good a representation of dying that I've ever heard in a rok context. The two songs that I find most interesting on the album are, not surprisingly, the two that are the most Enoesque: "My Sex" and "I Want to Be a Machine." Though there are little hints of Eno influence here and there on the album (the vocal treatments of "Life at Rainbow's End" and "Wide Boys," for instance) the true force of it emerges only on these two cuts, with their seamless synthi washes and unusual textural juxtapositions.

"I Want to Be a Machine" is a slow, mournful dirge about the pain of emotional vampirism. It gradually builds to a powerful, screaming climax that is abruptly shut off. A moving song, courtesy of the depth of feeling in Foxx's voice, and the fierce inspiration of Billy Currie's screeching violin.

"My Sex," the song that closes the album, has an instrumental setting that could've easily been an Eno's *Another Green World*—throbbing bass, acoustic piano, and broad synthi washes. In front, Foxx's dispassionate voice recites a catalog of well-turned metaphors exposing a wide variety of sexual sensations: "My sex waits for me like a mongrel waits, downwind on a tightrope leash." "My sex has a wanting wardrobe I still explore, of all the bodies I knew and those I want to know." "My sex is savage, tender, it wears no future faces, owns just random gender." "My sex is invested in, suburban photographs skyscraper shadows on [Warhol] a car-crash overpass [Godard]."

When *Ha! Ha!-Ha!*, the follow-up, was released later in '77 by Island in the UK, the American label did two things. They didn't see fit to release the album here and, worse, cut the first one out of the catalog and dumped what they had left into the cheapie bins. Morons. *Ha!-Ha!-Ha!* goes straight for the jugular. It pulls no punches, leaping and attacking where *Ultravox!* merely poked and prodded. This is truly *twisted* stuff. Steve Lilywhite (great name), the coproducer on the first album, gives the band a razor sharp metallically jagged sound. The opener "ROckwrock" is a gland rouser of the first order, one of the best releases for pent-up energies I've ever heard. The combination of Cann's precise breakneck drumming and Shear's unchained guitar sadism (releasing the spirit of *Raw Power*-era James Williamson from deep within him) is simply devastating. "The Frozen Ones," and "Fear in the Western World" are bone-chilling. Billy Currie's violin raises hairs on the back of my neck, while Shears turns animal, bending and twisting the shit out of his guitar strings.

Then, we are abruptly segued from the jaw-grinding conclusion of "Fear" into the floating, Satie-like piano of "Distant Smile," a haunting number that mid-song picks us up by the hair and allows Shears to brutally savage our ears for a bit before dropping us into the Dadaist, almost falling apart conclusion. Again, Ultravox! show us a masterful command of contrasts and instrumental textures, to say nothing of their merciless disregard for our fragile sensibilities. "The Man Who Dies Every Day" features a steady, train-chugging rhythm, à la Kraftwerk and a churning, swirling chorus of controlled white noise from Currie's synthesizer. Catchy. "Artificial

Life" takes us through a devastating portrait of a dehumanized, perpetually empty existence, once again punctuated muzickally by Currie, buzz-droning his way around the stabbing thrusts of Shears's icepick guitar.

"While I'm Still Alive" pits a loping discoid bass line against some shaky, schizo string wringing from Shears. The album closes with "Hiroshima Mon Amour," a song whose mournful lyrics describe a lost love on a bleak landscape. The remarkable thing about "Hiroshima" is not the subject matter nor the reference in the title, but the complete change in tone it gives the album. Instrumentally, it is a rolling, clicking disco song in the Giorgio Moroder/Kraftwerk vein capped stunningly by some wailing, mellifluous saxophone (credited only to "C C").

The contrast between the soft, reedy texture of the sax and the otherwise totally synthetic accompaniment is marvelous. Even more interesting (whoa! can he take it?) is the alternate version of the song, found on the B side of the U.K. "Rockwrock" single. This version is a *rock* song: pounding, vigorous and screeching. Currie again provides some shrieking violin work, and the band really turns vicious at the end. Two polar opposite viewpoints on the same melody and set of lyrics. Clever buggers, these limeys.

The vision has remained essentially unchanged, but it has been honed and sharpened. The reflection of this vision in the conception and performance on the album has lightened in focus—they're surer of themselves, and more driven to the edge of mania than on the first LP. *Ha!-Ha!-Ha!* is an acid nightmare, with the harsh, metallic taste of speed clinging to the back of your tongue.

The future's not returning, Bridges built for burning." ("The Frozen Ones"). "Your picture of yourself is a media myth. Underneath this floor we're on the edge of a cliff. Someone told me Jesus was the Devil's lover while we masturbated on a magazine cover." ("Fear in the Western World").

Also recorded at these sessions, but only released as a single prior to the album, was "Young Savage," a high-speed skull-basher. As Foxx sings, aptly, "Anything goes where no one knows your name." Early 1978 saw the release of a four song EP called "Live Retro," which turned out to be Stevie Shears' final moment of vinyl with the band. The disc includes a spirited rendition of "The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned," a subdued playing of "My Sex" with some nicely interwining synthesizers, a straightforward "The Man Who Does Every Day" and an amphetamine-fueled run-through of "Young Savage" (even more depraved and frenzied than the studio version).

Nineteen seventy-eight brought with it a new guitarist, Robin Simon, and a new sound. Foxx and the boys trotted off to Cologne, Germany to record with Conny Plank, producer of (early) Kraftwerk, Neu, Harmonia, Cluster and all those other Teutonic synthi bands that overlap so damn confusingly. I don't know whether Shears took the band's throat-ripping attack with him, or whether Conny Plank exerted a tremendous influence on them, or whether the change was just a natural evolution—but whatever the reason, *Systems of Romance* released in November (Island U.K., Antilles domestic) is *different*. The attack is fuller, more rounded—one could say blunted. This doesn't mean it's a bad album, or not as good as either of its predecessors. Shit, no. Just a switch that takes adjusting to. Currie and his keyboards now occupy the leading edge of the band's sound, and, not surprisingly, this album sounds even more like those boche bands I mentioned back a ways (listen to "Negativland" on Neu's first album, *Neu!*, for a good idea of what I mean). Have Ultravox—ohmygod—*mellowed*? Have they flushed all the mind-warping drugs from their bodies and replaced them with Ovaltine? Nah. I don't think so, but some of the fear, the venom, and the explosive brutality has receded in favor of a shimmering futurism, romanticism (as should be obvious from the title).

"Slow Motion," the opener, unfolds with a crescendoing synthi tone, and neatly slides into a syrup-thick, leather-skinned song about fleeting contacts. "I Can't Stay Long" follows with its overechoed guitar and flawless drumming.

> I can feel
> The turning of the tides
> Pulling away the night
> Like a sheet
> From over me
> In summer time
> Dissolve to a beach
> And everywhere seems to be
> Just a flicker on a silent screen

PACK!
GASP!
BLITZER, STRAP IN ANYONE'S DOWN THERE. GOT'S DA FEELING WE GONNA HAVE SOME. HAVE A ROUGH LANDING ONE STEP NOT DA CUSHIONS!

'Someone Else's Clothes' tells of the confusion of identity, things that are familiar yet strange to you. Robin Simon's guitar takes the front seat here, but it does little to snare our attention. There's more guitar on "Blue Light," and it's a bit better—kind of sinuous and serpentine—aiding the song's evocation of a flickering memory. "Some of Them" brings up the energy level a bit with some strident guitar and skin smashing from the indefatigable Cann. The lyrics explore the writer's emotional responses to the lingering memories of people he's known. "The Quiet Men" returns us to the spare arrangements of the first album. Rhythm machine, stiffly strummed guitar, and bass move the song in an easy, Kraftwerk shuffle. The bridge features a lyrical synth melody from Currie sounding a bit like a French street tune. Infectious. Dislocation begins with a series of ringing, metallic tones joined by a treated-guitar line, and then reinforced by an altered vocal chorus. The images, again, are ones of unconnected sense impressions and the singer's inability to order and make sense of them. "Maximum Acceleration" has a snazzy whistling melody line with counterpoint provided by the guitar in twisting-taffy fashion.

A face echoes slowly
A signal close by me
The landscapes are changing—and
Some of us flipped a coin
And shimmered away

There is a surging, almost triumphant quality to "When You Walk Through Me," but the lyrics still emphasize the lack of control. "When you walk through me, I almost lose me. It's so confusing." And "I turn around to switch the scene, the room dives like a submarine." The album ends on a melancholy note with "Just for a Moment," which has an arrangement reminiscent of "I Want to Be a Machine" from the first LP. The writer again seems hopelessly despairing about his predicament. It could be about one of the last humans alive, feeling the loneliness of a complete alienation and clutching desperately to the last bit of human contact in his grasp (reminding me of a Brian Aldiss story).

We'll never leave here—ever
Let's stay in here forever
And when the streets are quiet
We'll walk out in the silence
Listening to the music the machines make
I let my heart break
Just for a moment

The album as a whole is perhaps more muzickal than the previous two. The songs are more melodic, the singing more fluid and almost breezy. The textural variation is confined to a much narrower area, and the startling King Crimson–like contrasts (the pastoral vs. the chainsaw) are nearly absent. The lyrics are not as aggressively despairing as those on *Ha! Ha! Ha!* but in their passivity they are just as effectively depressing. It's as though responding with anger is lashing out, isn't worth the effort any more. Just drift with the tides and external forces allowing them to distance you from humanity. There is a strange ambivalence in this plea for distance, and the obvious need for human contact. This impression of remoteness was strengthened when Ultravox toured the US in early 1978, and played a club called Hurrah in New York City.

Foxx stands apart from the band, coolly elegant, enigmatic, distant, hiding behind a faint, Mona Lisa smile. While he sings, Foxx looks almost unblinkingly ahead of him at a support pole (which I was using to keep me upright). His eyes are wide and unfocused, his hips swaying gently. His body looks thin and frail, almost overpowered by the mass of machinery that occupies the stage.

Billy Currie is surrounded with synthesizers, but handles them with command and assurance. His face, though, has the look of a snotty English public school boy about it. I think the slight upturn of the nose and the high forehead do it. Chris Cross looks like a healthy Keith Richards—the lean, dark look of the grown-up feral child without the hollow cheeks and shell-shocked eyes. Robin Simon is boyish, blonde, and almost invisible. Warren Cann looks totally at ease behind the drums, his face a peculiar mixture of the feline and the oriental. His features are small, sharply defined, and closely set together. His hair is extruded ziti-like in an inverted U above his forehead and over his ears. Live, their sound is heavily synthetic, driving like a great tidal surge. Foxx bobs and floats above them like a piece of flotsam on an open sea.

A few months later, sometime in the late spring, the band broke up. Within weeks came word that Cann, Currie, and Cross had reformed without Foxx and Simon, and with the addition of singer/guitarist/synthesist Midge Ure (late of a prepunk pop band called Slik, and a postpunk pop band called the Rich Kids, the latter started by ex Pistol Glen Matlock). It seemed an odd matching, to say the least. But when the band hit Hurrah again, in November of this past year, it was still unmistakably Ultravox, albeit with some alteration.

Currie is now the cornerstone—his synthesizer and screeching violin occupy the melodic center of just about all the songs. Chris Cross now spends more time behind a keyboard than he does strapped to an electric bass, and Ure, his appearance and movements self-consciously impeccable, occasionally leaves his synth to strum a guitar. He seems less than comfortable with the instrument, and his playing is merely adequate. His singing is a bit better, though at times too melodramatic for my tastes—overstating where Foxx understated. The emotion that breaks his voice sounds forced and studied, but otherwise he fits in well. The band is leaner, tighter, more versatile, and perhaps a bit more homogenized in sound. The dynamics of the band's stage presence has become more evenly balanced among them, but there is a strong center lacking.

Ure might settle into the role, or maybe the band will evolve into a unit that won't require one. He's got the looks and the style, but he hasn't become comfortable enough (as a newcomer, this is natural) to take command. New songs occupy almost half of the show, and while some of them inadequately echo past works, a couple show the promise of interesting things ahead. The show opener, "New Europeans," is a knockout, and "We Stood Still," a climax in the set, showcases an irresistible synth, hook, and some snazzy crooning from Ure. And the encore—step aside for a boisterous, double-bassed version of Eno's "King's Lead Hat" (a marvelous surprise). Yowza. We are promised a new album soon, on an undisclosed label. The eighties are upon us.

Next month: new vinyl to feed your habit.

Changes

The Post brothers Ron and Russ, are best remembered for their splendid triple Kennedy assassination in '72 although there exists a blatant fondness on the part of the media for Ron's now classic taunting of the pope.

They've been princes, replete with luscious harems, they've been pirates, janitors they have a few random doctorates, they've conquered worlds and destroyed others, and they've slept with anybody you've ever wanted to. They have friends, likes-dislikes rationale if not somber moments. They are not just the savage mercenaries you'd like to think them

That is a major aspect though Everybody has their professional pride

But—what are Ron and Russ really like?

They're not alone.

Along with Savage Henry Monsieur Boche Mike and Hiroshima the Earth Mother, the Post brothers can travel freely (and apparently at a nanosecond's notice) from reality level to reality level They are not the only group that is able to shift along the realistic frame reference by the theory's definition there must be countless such cliques The brothers live in Burgundy at the Cold Front house where the chances are admittedly better for running into other shifters that is if they can survive crossing the street

They're not the same.

Russ is, in fact, three months older than Ron while Ron is more developed than his sibling Russ wears a beard while Ron prefers a mustache Russ has slept with Mother Nature but Ron thinks of her as a sister Russ (as you've heard) never sleeps and is strangely twisted by choice Ron is a paranoid by practice

They have no morals.

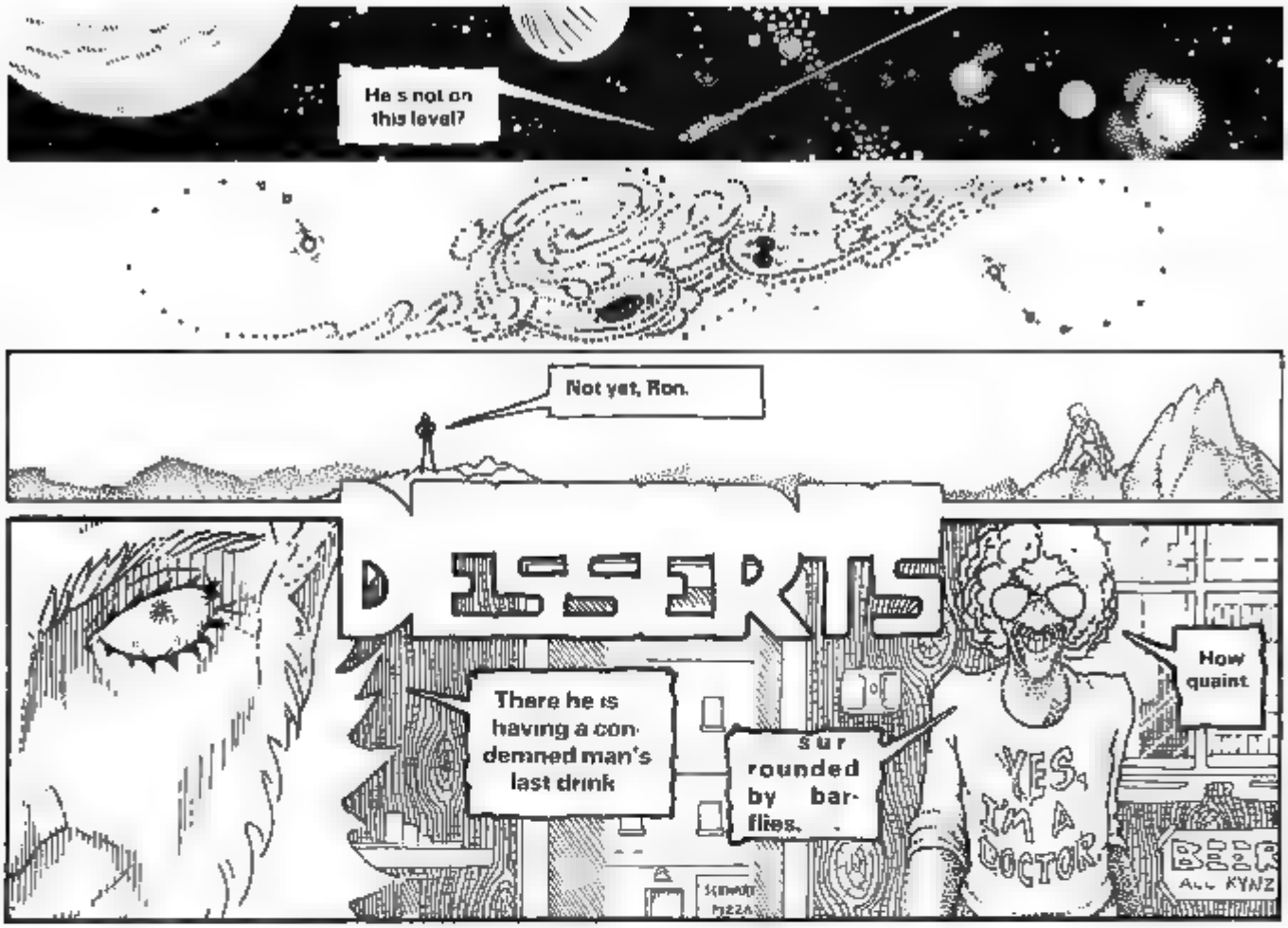
If you accept that there exists a para-infinite array of alternate realities Time Space enough for everything then the concept of individualism is an absurdity

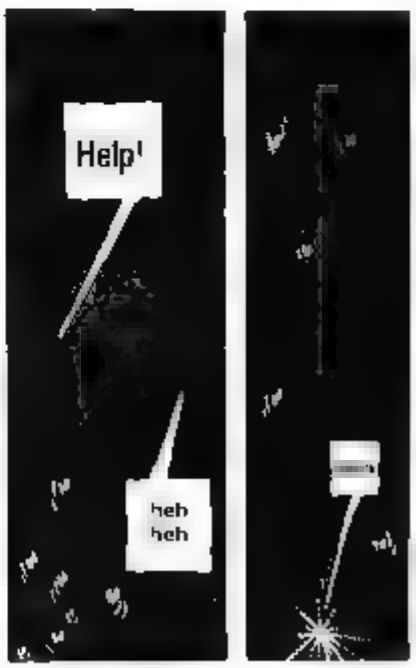
Why, for even their Kennedy coup, they practiced heavily in a numerous one of bloodstained moments in somebody's history Ron was obsessed with getting every detail perfect sometimes going as far as trying it out in a variety of weather conditions. (He feels that it worked best in six feet of snow although their final draft was pulled off in a sweaty Incan temple in Peru.)

How do they shift?

Instantly and naturally You can assume it to be a biological function if you wish but keep in mind that this is still just an assumption Only in Mike's case does the massive drug intake have any bearing on the ability

The Post brothers deserve each other and the lives they lead They enjoy it all immensely

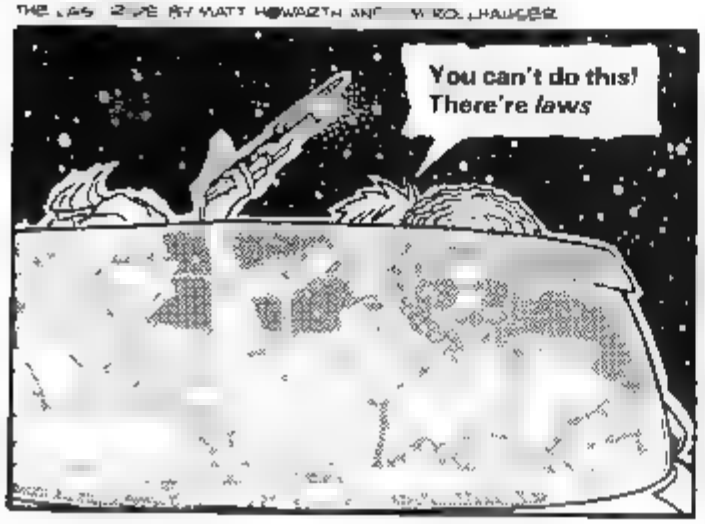


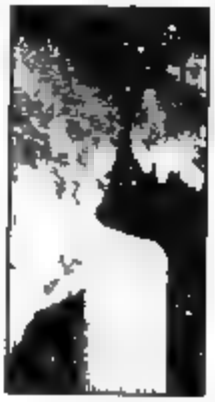


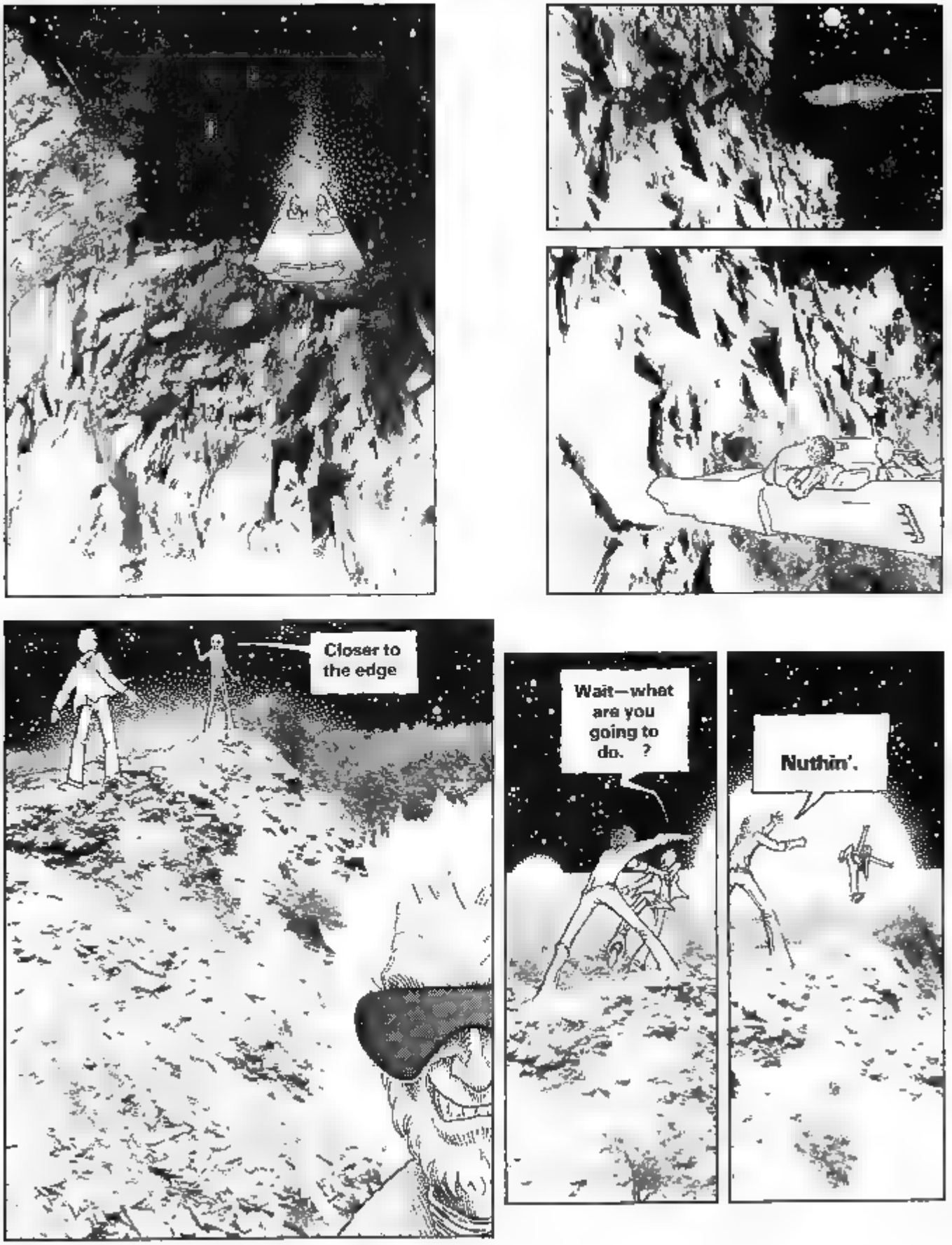
NEXT: at the edge of another world

DESSERTS BY MATT HOWARTH

THE LAST ROPE BY MATT HOWARTH AND [illegible] WOLFINGER






Closer to the edge
Wait—what are you going to do. ?
Nuthin'.

NEXT: payoff at the Center of the Earth

CENTERGONE BY MATT HOWARTH

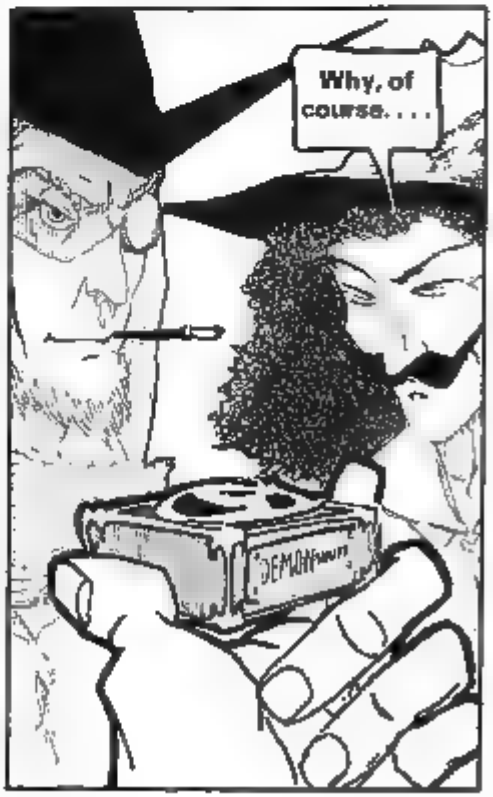
? HEAVY METAL

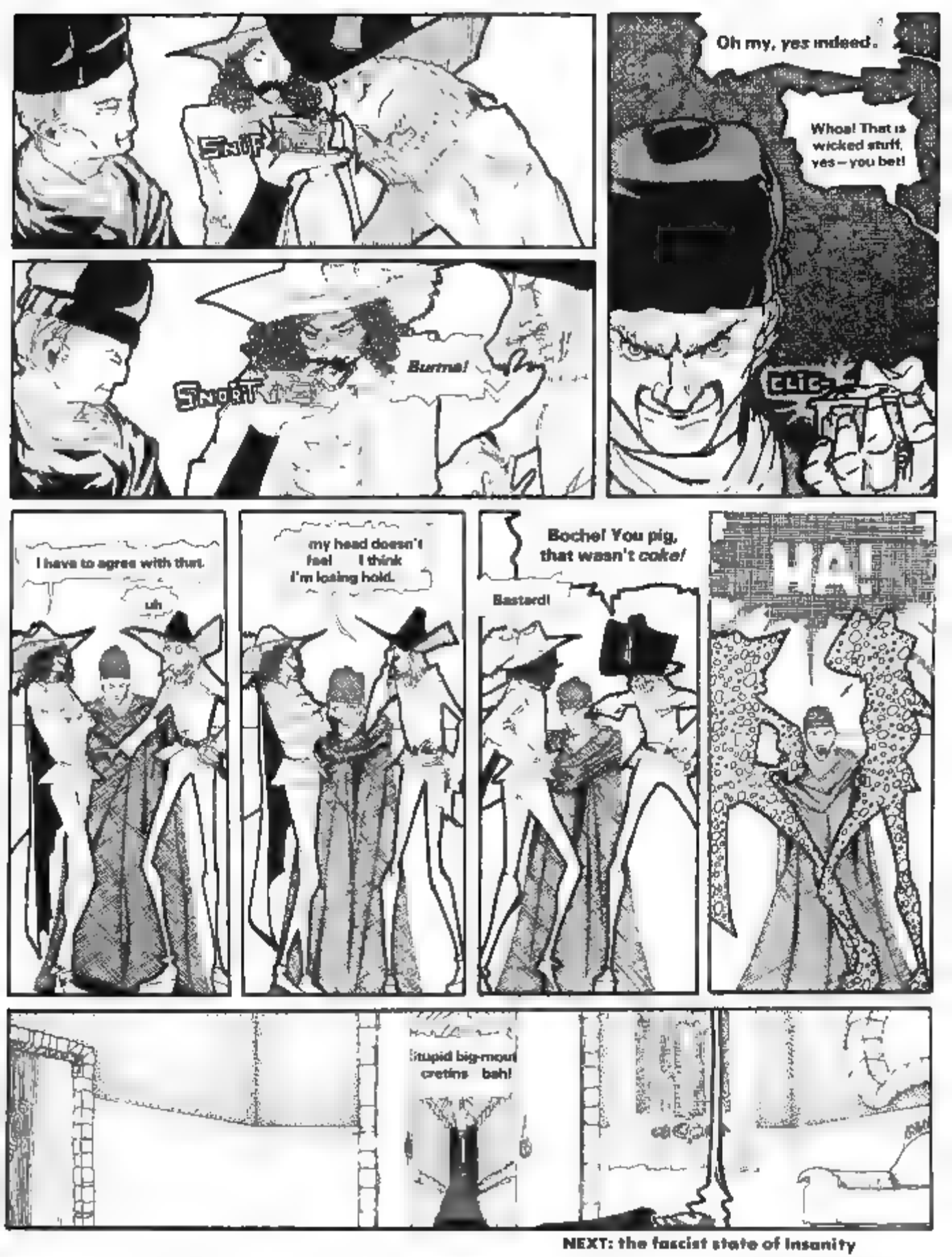
The brothers Ho Kwando S. Roswell Hart, to have words with the learned doctor Lao-Ti Foster.
Come in, do! It is always a pleasure to welcome such as yourself to my humble villa.
No time, we're on our way to yet another adventure. But we did kill the Earl, as you requested.
Now, as to our payment of uncut Astral Coke.
My Earl?

You fools...
sob-

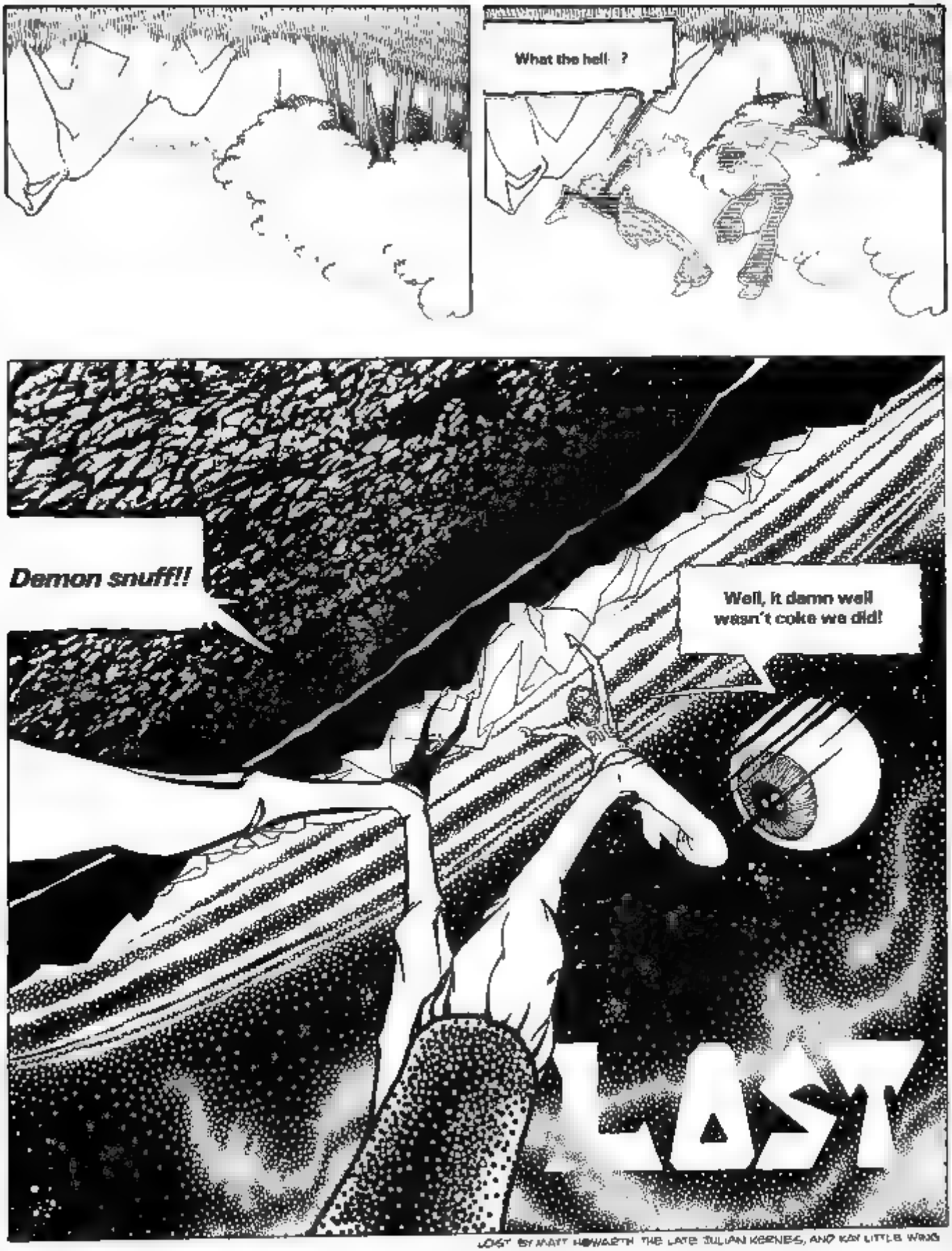
Well, Boche?

Yes, yes. You must be going . . . Please try some of my personal rasarve first . . . yes.


Why, of course. . . .
DEMONFILM

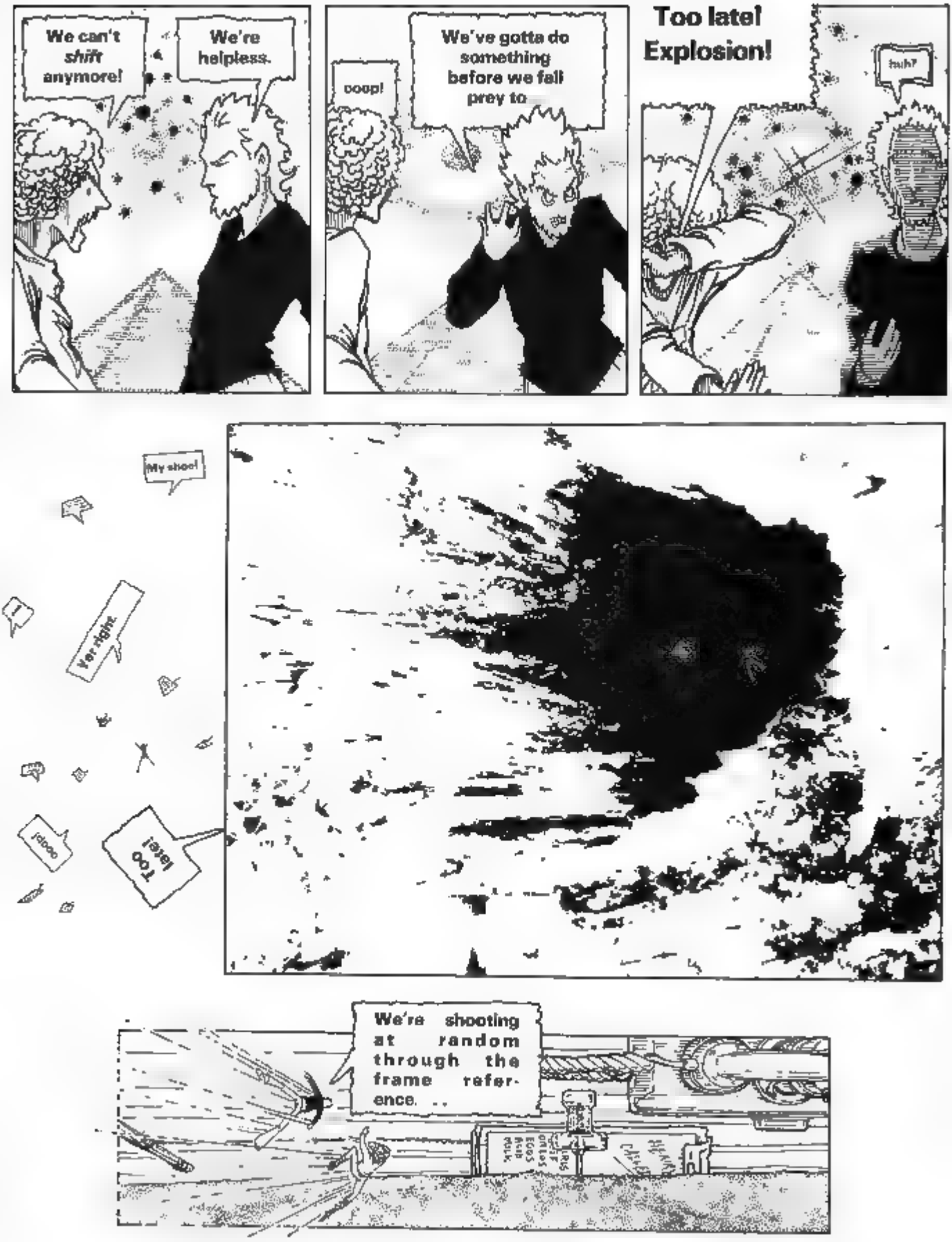


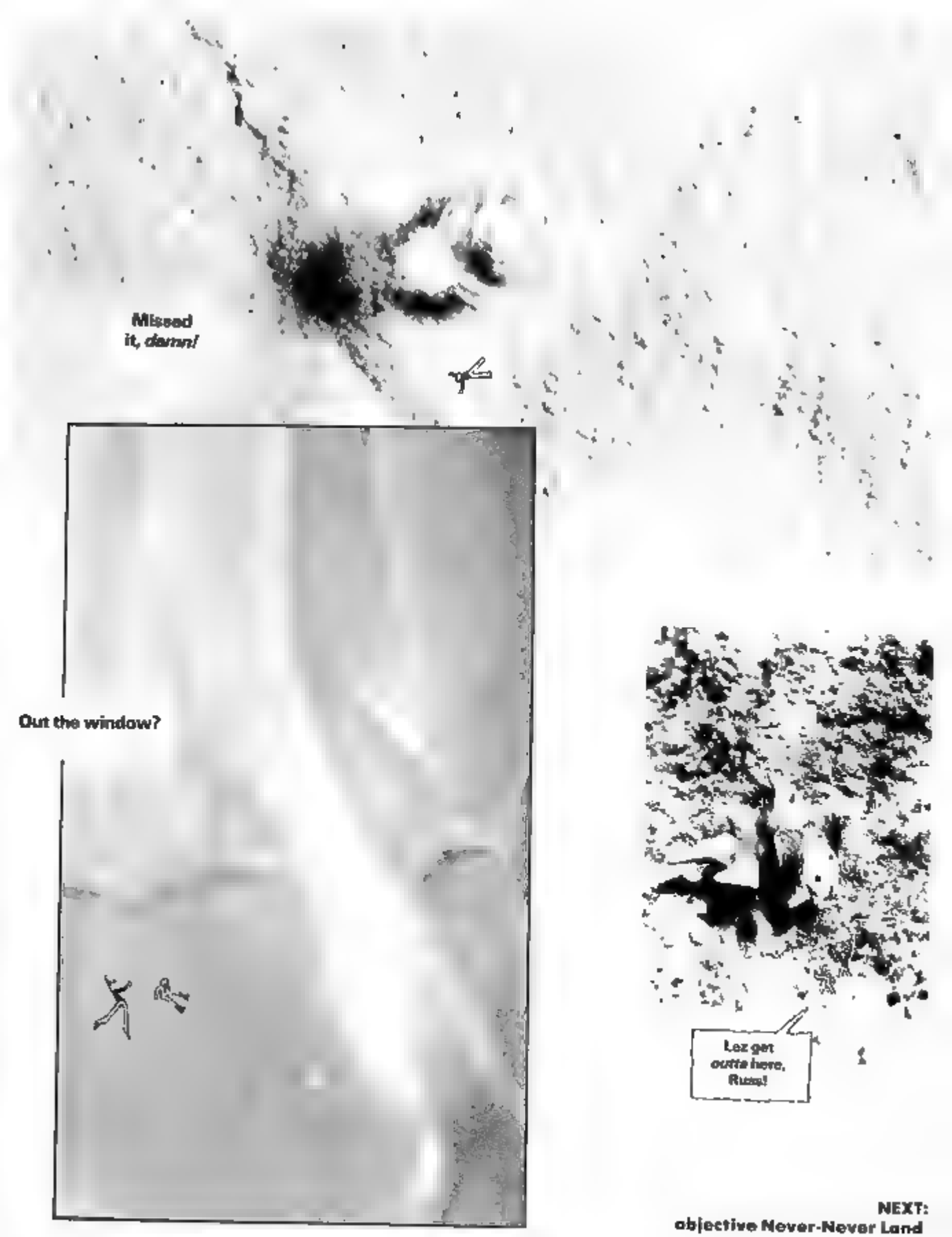
NEXT: the fascist state of insanity



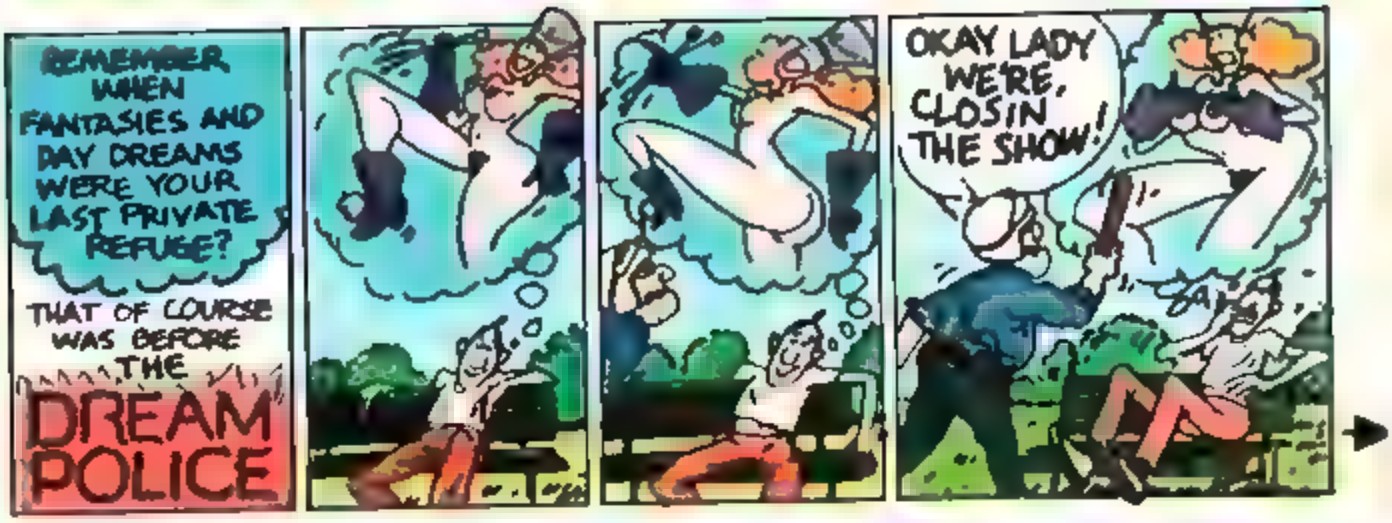
LOST BY MATT HOWARTH THE LATE JULIAN KERNES, AND KAY LITTLE WOOD

Boche's *really* done it to us this time, Ron.
Demon snuff is that shit that upsets shift control among the reality levels, isn't it?
Fall.
?


We can't shift anymore!
We're helpless.
We've gotta do something before we fall prey to...
ooop!
Too late! Explosion!
huh?
My shoe!
Ver right
Too late!
ooop!
We're shooting at random through the frame reference...



NEXT:
objective Never-Never Land


REMEMBER WHEN FANTASIES AND DAY DREAMS WERE YOUR LAST PRIVATE REFUGE?
THAT OF COURSE WAS BEFORE THE
DREAM POLICE
OKAY LADY WE'RE CLOSIN THE SHOW!

FLIX by Bhob

continued from page 7

budgeted TV commercials are fashioned with hidden subliminals embedded in intentionally distorted depictions of the world, all calculated to manipulate the viewer. It is one thing to have this going on without your knowledge. Quite another to place yourself at the mercy of a master moviemaker like Alfred Hitchcock. *Psycho* has a very interesting construction, and that game with the audience was fascinating," recalled Hitchcock. "I was directing the viewers. You might say I was playing them, like an organ." Which is just what the audience wanted Hitchcock to do, and exactly why they went, as willing victims, to see the film. Similarly, audiences were once eager to participate in the mass hysteria, their retching and fainting cued by the subliminal audio and visual stimuli buried throughout William Friedkin's *The Exorcist*. Although Wilson Bryan Key's chapter on *The Exorcist*'s use of subliminals in his book *Media Sexploitation* (New American Library, 1976) is a probing and trenchant analysis of this film, Key fails to emphasize the all-important distinction between the deception, which is a simple part of the storyteller's art, and the much more frightening deception of a secret behavior modification technology happening in our living rooms.

I read the news today oh boy

The camouflaged weaponry of hucksterism is not the only danger lurking in today's anxiety-ridden world of deceptions and illusions. (And how to bypass this "wall of illusion," confront and deal with the despair and hypocrisy of contemporary life is what the Beatles tried to teach us thirteen years ago on their *Sergeant Pepper* LP.) You may have just given up smoking, but as you walk down the street you encounter smiling attractive young women hired to put free cigarettes in your hand. You may be watching the NBC Nightly News" while eating only to suddenly be told by John Chancellor that the food on the end of your fork has been recalled because it contains ground glass.

He blew his mind out in a car

He didn't notice that the lights had changed

Your automobile's whining instruction to fasten the seat belt is also a constant reminder of how you might possibly accelerate toward death's metallic embrace. Or at a late-night bus stop, you may turn to a stranger (as did a friend of mine) and suggest, "Would you like to split a cab?" only to hear (as he did), "Would you like this cigarette put out in your eye?"

Somebody spoke and I went into a dream

You may say to yourself, "Well, I'm not afraid of the dark," but as you almost float off to sleep on your waterbed your eyes widen in the night blackness with the realization that your bedroom, your house, your block, your city could become nuclear rubble in the next instant. That the nuke loons are hard at work on new scenarios to turn you into a megadeath statistic. And as the announcer used to say on the fantasy/thriller radio series of the forties, "You know that there is no *es-s-cape!*" Finally you sleep. But elsewhere in arson-wracked neighborhoods, petrified homeowners stay awake until dawn.

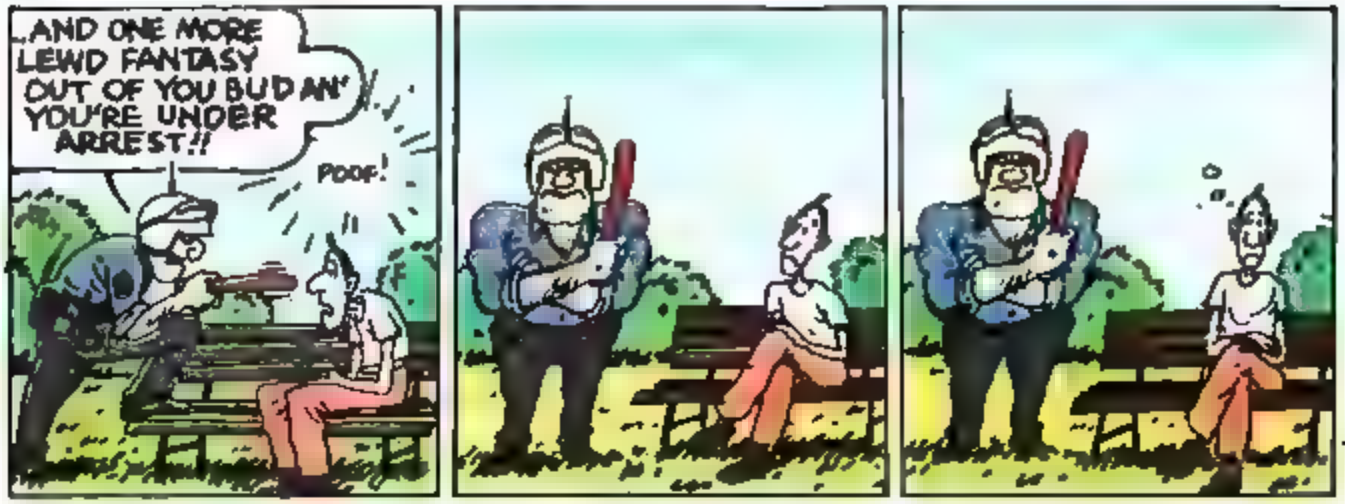
Now! Fear no more! At last you can relax with the new wonder fear drug, oxprenolol, which brings fast fas-s-st FAS-S-ST relief! Manufactured by the Swiss pharmaceutical firm Ciba-Geigy for heart disorders, oxprenolol can also block the beta receptors on cells from the effects of adrenalin, eliminating perspiration, rapid pulse, trembling, and the other physiological manifestations of fear.

Apparently human beings are afraid of *everything*. Last year a "Tomorrow Show" discussion about phobias was taped minus one of the scheduled guests because a fear of elevators made it impossible for this guest to get to the NBC studio. A catalog of similar phobias is vast, and scanning such a list I'm bemused to realize how many fantasy or suspense films have either dramatized or exploited these fears: pediophobia, a fear of dolls (*Magic*); megalophobia, fear of large objects (*The Incredible Shrinking Man*); hydrophobia, fear of water (*The Poseidon Adventure*); meteorophobia (*Meteor*); cometophobia (the made-for-TV movie *A Fire in the Sky*); polyphobia, fear of many things ("The Trouble with Tribbles" on "Star Trek"); apiphobia, fear of bees (*The Swarm*); homichlophobia, fear of fog (John Carpenter's new one, *The Fog*); teratophobia, fear of bearing a monster (*It's Alive*); acrophobia, fear of heights (*Vertigo*); haptephobia, fear of being touched (*Hand of Death*); erythrophobia, fear of red (*Marnie* and *Deep Red*); domatophobia, fear of houses (*Burnt Offerings*); amaxophobia, fear of vehicles (*Duel*); traumatophobia, fear of injury (*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*); xenophobia, fear of strangers (*Strangers on a Train*); dromophobia, fear of crossing streets (*The Car*); satanophobia (*The Exorcist*); ornithophobia (*The Birds*); and claustrophobia (*The Collector*). And so on. And so on. And so on. (There are many more than the ones I've listed here. How many more can you add? Send 'em in!)

Some people even fear fear itself (phobophobia), and two 1959 films tackled this one—Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* and William Castle's *The Tingler* (in which a doctor discovers that fear actually causes a centipedelike creature to grow at the base of the spine). And let's not overlook proctophobia, fear of the rectum—which must explain why the Walt Disney studio decided to make *The Black Hole*.

Yes, there's a film for every fear, and with the real world hovering on a precipice it's only logical that filmmakers would. In 1979, raise the stakes, thus sparking the current boom in cinematic horror. Spinnered in several directions, the New Horror ranges from the pure dream surrealism of *Phantasm* to the science fiction trappings of *Alien* to Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu* (an elegant effort to recapture the glory of the German cinema during the twenties), while other recent New Horror films have offered commentary on our current nightmarish real world—John Frankenheimer's environmental *Prophecy* of monsters spawned by methyl mercury poisonings and *Dawn of the Dead*, George Romero's satire on our zombie-like Consumer Culture.

People are changing. They're becoming less human," says David Kibner (Leonard Nimoy), the psychiatrist in Phil Kaufman's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, and the viewer soon grasps the true horror of Kaufman's film: Kibner's new life-style, psy-



chobabble as an ultrahip paperback shrink is no different than his 'born again' stance as a body snatcher. And there are striking parallels between the cult of the pod people in *Body Snatchers* and the Guyana Massacre, an event that happened almost simultaneously with the film's release. Then there's *Apocalypse Now*, when this long awaited epic finally arrived, it showed us Vietnam as a hell more horrible than any envisioned by the scriptwriters and directors working in the usual conventions of the horror genre.

But I just had to look.
Having read the book.

The disappointing CBS TV adaptation of *Salem's Lot*, with its dampened situations and compressed characterizations, is the obvious illustration of Stephen King's statement (in the interview that follows) on the impossibility of doing horror effectively on television. But out of the stewpot of all the recent theatrical films cited above, I suspect that a fantastically wild and totally different kind of horror cinema will soon emerge to begin slouching toward Bethlehem.

Orbs rotate. The cosmos shifts. Shadows elongate as though storyboarded by Giorgio de Chirico. Immense, towering Dolby system speakers switch on with a thundering bass rumble, followed by the opening frenzied chords of an eldritch Erich Zann/Jim Morrison soundtrack collaboration that speaks in secret alphabets. An all encompassing nimbus of the horror, the horror hovers over an abyss on the distant horizon line. From a vanishing point on this fearscape spring two perspective lines as the (surreal-life horrors of Francis Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* converge with the horror genre "apotheosis now" of Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, scheduled for release in May. The point where these two films meet, unreel, and intertwine signals the dawning of a new age for the horror film. The face of cinematic horror may never be the same after this summer. And meanwhile, our interview with *The Shining* creator Stephen King rolls on, nexorably toward that dawning. Here's Part III:

BHOB: When did Kubrick acquire *The Shining*, and why did he pick it?

STEPHEN KING: It was bought long before publication; it was after *Barry Lyndon* was out. I know that Kubrick came on the scene, it seems to me, in the late summer of 1975, so it's been in process with him for about four years now. I know that he was interested in making a real horror picture. This was a stated ambition of his as long ago as 1956.

I heard a story from a Warner Brothers flack that's kind of amusing. He said that the secretary in Kubrick's office got used to this steady "THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!" from the inner office—which was Kubrick picking up books, reading about forty pages, and then throwing them against the wall. He was really looking for a property. One day, along about ten o'clock, the thumps stopped coming, and she buzzed him. He didn't answer the buzz, she got really worried, thinking he'd had a heart attack or something. She went in, and he was reading *The Shining*. He was about halfway through it. He looked up and said, "This is the book." Shortly after that, Warners in California wanted to know if the book had been bought, and if so, who owned it, and if a purchase deal could be worked out—which it could, since Warners itself owned the book. I do think that if he wanted to make an all-out horror picture, he picked a perfectly good book to do it with. It's a scary book.

I've had some people say to me, "I wonder what it would be like if he'd done *Salem's Lot*—but I can't see Kubrick doing that because it's too much of a conventional horror story. Somebody in *Film Comment* described *Salem's Lot* as a "reactionary" horror story. They imputed a lot of things about what the book was saying, as being a subconscious putdown of gays and any kind of deviant life style—which is nothing but pure bullshit. The article is mainly about Larry Cohen, who did *It's Alive* (1974). At one point it looked like Cohen was going to write, direct and produce *Salem's Lot*. The writer felt it would be funny to see such a sensibility as Cohen's—who is antiestablishment—in that in *It's Alive* and *It Lives Again* (1978) he looks at this family unit that's breaking down, it's being eaten up by what you'd think of as the safest member of the family group, the baby. The babies turn out to be these flesh-eating vampire-type creatures. The writer said it would be interesting to see what would happen when Cohen tried to adapt my material, which was "reactionary." *[King laughs.]*

BHOB: In *The Shining* I noticed a curious bit of synchronicity. Danny's experience in Room 217 takes place on page 217.

KING: It's been pointed out to me before.

BHOB: It's very strange.

KING: *[Laughs.]* Is that in the paperback?

BHOB: Yes.

KING: I don't know if that happens in the hardcover or not. Just a minute. I never thought of that. *[He turns to page 217 of the hardcover edition.]* It's Room 217, and it's on page 217. It is. It's peculiar. This Judith Wax book, *Starting in the Middle*, this is really creepy. She was one of the people killed on that DC-10 that crashed in Chicago.

BHOB: She did the annual *Playboy* feature, "That Was the Year That Was."

KING: She worked for *Playboy*, and she also wrote humorous books—a little bit more literate than, say, Erma Bombeck's books. She talks in that book about her fear of flying and how she's convinced that she's going to die on a plane—which she did. The passage where she discusses that is on page 191 of the book, and the flight number of the plane that crashed was 191.

BHOB: Did she write that as a humor piece?

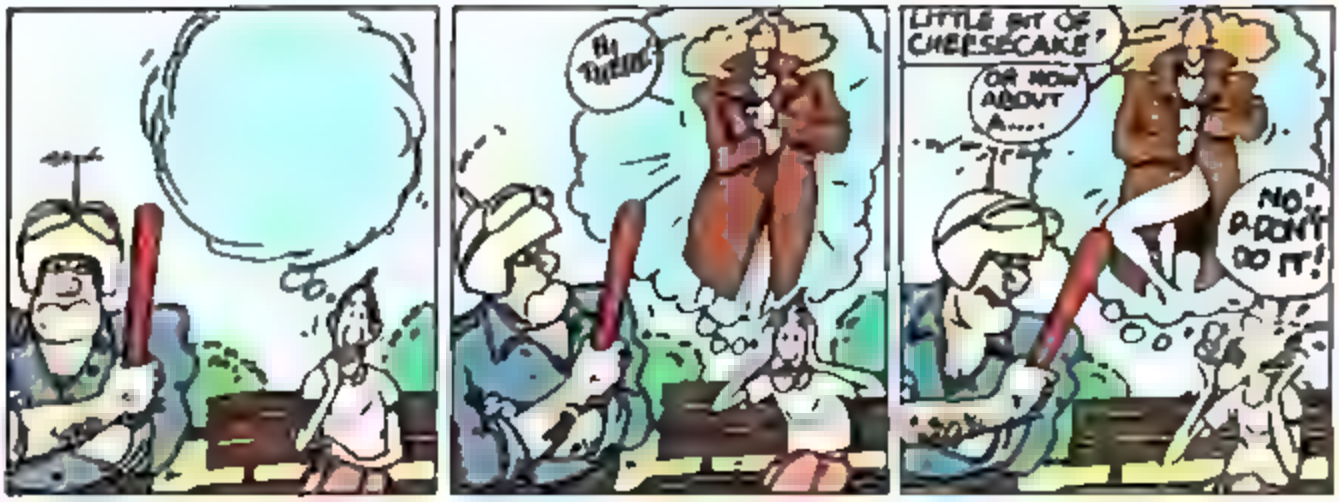
KING: She approached it humorously, but, at the same time, people who have read the book say you can see that she really hated to fly.

BHOB: In the film, Room 217 has reportedly been changed to Room 237 for legal reasons. What legal reasons?

KING: I don't know what the story is on that. I've also heard that, but I don't understand why. I popped the numbers right out of the air. It was just a number to give the room, but there was no significance to those numbers.

BHOB: Did Kubrick shoot test footage to see what the topiary animals would look like in stop-motion animation?

KING: Yes. That's right. He did. He had somebody do that—somebody in Europe. I



think that no matter how well it was done it would be difficult to believe. It's not difficult to believe somehow in your head when you're reading the book, but I think that a movie is a different proposition. So I'm not really put out that he's not using the hedge animals. I know people that are really disappointed but they're the sort of people that rarely read a book before going to see a movie. And when they do, by God, it had better conform to what they read or they're going to [illegible]

DIOD: It seems to me that you often take the most preposterous situation you can dream up, and then you set out to convince the reader it's plausible.

KING: Yes. I do. I've got a story coming [illegible] in an anthology edited by Kirby McCauley], it's really a short novel called *The Mist*. I said to myself, 'You know all these grade B movies, these drive-in pictures. The real proponent of what I was trying to get at in this story was a guy named Bert I [illegible]. He does big bugs and things like that, and he [illegible]. There's a certain sort of funny there's nothing really wrong with even the best of them. They're just sort of fun when they're good. The one I like the best, *Empire of the Ants* [1977], is just fun. This is about people inspecting an island where there are going to be condominiums, and the ants are out of control. I said to myself, 'Let's take all those B movie conventions. Let's take the giant bugs and everything, and let's take the most mundane setting I can think of.' Which, in this case, was a supermarket. And I said, 'I want to set these things loose outside and see if I can do it and really scare people—see if I can make that work.' And, by God, I think I did. You can judge for yourself. Kirby's book, *Night Forces*, will be out next year. The story is about forty thousand words long and I think it's really good. There are about eighteen or twenty original stories of the supernatural in the book and he did a whale of a job. He got Joyce Carol Oates and Isaac Bashevis Singer.

DIOD: Sort of like a *Dangerous Visions* of horror?

KING: That's what he had in mind, yeah.

DIOD: What's the about worms crawling out of Jack Nicholson's head in *The Shining*?

KING: Yeah. A larger-than-life replica of Nicholson's head was constructed. I think that Dick Smith worked on the make-up along with a lot of other people and that it cost a lot of money. There have been rumors that the head splits open and worms crawl out of it.

John Williams is going to do the music for *The Shining*. Kubrick has been known for his big, expensive movies that tend to be more arty than commercial, particularly *Barry Lyndon* and he's indicated in what direction he's going by having some very obscure music. And he's used a lot of classical stuff. But Williams is a very *commercial* music maker for the movies, so I think that points in the fact that Kubrick really is trying to make a blockbuster. People are starting to call it a blockbuster already, and nobody's even seen a frame of the footage—so he's got good word of mouth going. A cameraman on *The Shining*, who also worked on *Satan's Lair*, said that he had never seen anything like it. He thinks it's going to be a dynamite, fantastic picture.

DIOD: Did your *New York Times Book Review* piece on David Madden prompt any increase of interest in his novel *Bijou*?

KING: I don't know if it has or not. Madden has just published a sequel to it called *Pleasure Dome* and I knew that he was working on that. He and I correspond back and forth at irregular intervals, and I mean really irregular because he's not a very good correspondent and neither am I. He's interested in a lot of the same things I am: the hard-boiled writers of the thirties, the sort of writers who produced *film noir* in the forties. Cain and Dashiell Hammett and people like that. He's got a critical magazine called *Tough Guys* for which he writes these critical, very literary pieces, and he asked me if I would contribute a piece on Cain. I told him, yeah, I would, but I never have. Mostly because that literary sort of stuffy style kind of bums me out.

DIOD: What was the name of the NBC radio program on which your mother played the organ?

KING: Ah, God! It was a church show. It was on at ten o'clock, NBC, on Sunday mornings and it was something like "The Church Today" or something. I guess it really was a radio broadcast from church where they had the remote.

DIOD: Has anyone acquired your *Children of the Corn* screenplay?

KING: Yes, it's been optioned now by a Maine group. They hope to go into production with it in Iowa next summer. They have a very tight budget. I did the screenplay for any mythical profits that might show up, possibly a pittance. I think I got five hundred dollars or something for it. They've done a lot of TV. They've done one feature film. It was a flop; it ran for a week in New York and then closed. They've done a lot of TV commercials. The guy who will be directing hasn't made a feature film in eight years. They've got a wonderful production setup. The name of the production company is Varied Directions and they run out of Rockport, Maine. The budget is eight hundred thousand dollars. We'll see if they can get it off the ground.

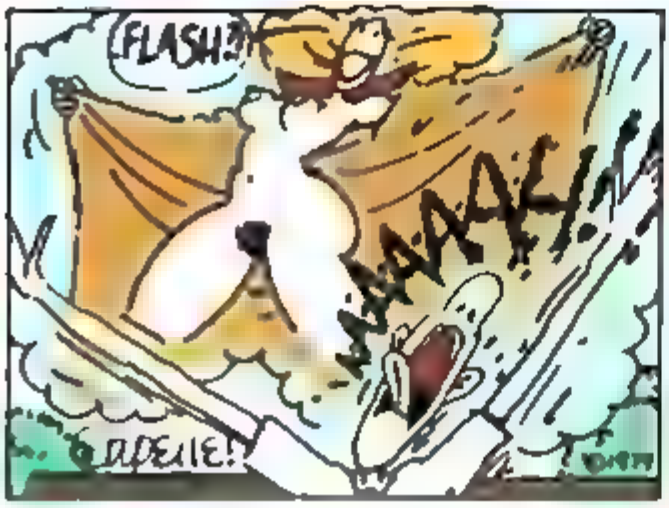
DIOD: But as "the best-selling author in the world in 1980," why are you dealing with a small local outfit?

KING: Because they're willing to make the film for cheap money, and I think that one of the attitudes in Hollywood is, 'We don't want to look at anything that isn't going to cost us three million dollars.' They have the tremendous urge to roll the dice for a lot of money. 'Let's go twelve million dollars. Let's go sixteen million dollars.' I shopped it around—Dan Curtis and some other people—and I'm the type of guy where, if a lot of people tell me something I've done isn't so good, after a while I'll begin to nod my head and say, 'Well, maybe you're right. It isn't so good.' But this is good. Scary. Locations in the Midwest, two major characters, very small budget. A lot of people were not interested in that, but these people were. I thought to myself, "Well, let's see what we can do. We'll do a little homegrown, a little grassroots, and we'll see if we can make this thing fly." Call it a hobby if you want.

DIOD: Has Steven Spielberg ever expressed any interest in your work?

KING: No.

DIOD: Because both of you take an average man, and put him in an unusual situation in



a commonplace setting, and then begin to intensify that.

KING: He's good at that. He's really good at that. And it's interesting. I've got a story in *Night Shift* called "Trucks," which is similar to a story that Richard Matheson did in *Playboy* called "Duel." Both deal with trucks as monsters, but the similarity becomes a little strained after that basic premise—which is not so unusual if you've ever been caught between two of them on the turnpike. Spielberg did the TV movie of *Duel* [1971] which I think is maybe the finest movie for television that's ever been made. I've got one of those video cassette recorders, and I tell my wife the only reason I got that was so I could record *Duel* and the original *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

BHOB: Since you did not want to host the proposed *Night Shift* TV show, and since you also turned down a directing offer from Milton Subotsky, one might assume that you have a desire to avoid the celebrity game.

KING: I don't want to be a celebrity, but neither do I want to avoid it just to avoid being a celebrity. Writers are anonymous. I could walk out here anywhere, and nobody would know who I was. When I'm in Maine sometimes I get recognized. They know your name, and sometimes if you say, "I'm Stephen King," they say, "Are you the person who wrote *Salem's Lot*?" If Paul Newman walked down the street, he would be recognized immediately. If the right opportunity came along, I wouldn't let the idea of becoming a celebrity stop me, but the idea of being host for a TV program is not a very good idea right now because I want to scare people. Television is so hamstrung; its hands are tied. It's castrated. You can't scare people on TV. It's ridiculous to talk about having a series frightening people on TV when we're locked in the age of "Diff'rent Strokes," "Charlie's Angels," and "Vegas." If I ever did a horror-type program on TV, I'd want it to be a success. Since "The Outer Limits" and "Twilight Zone" went off the air, I don't really think that there have been any successful horror programs on TV, and one of the reasons why is I don't think you can scare people.

I talked with Aaron Spelling about this on the telephone. He was interested in an anthology program. He dangled this particular carrot in front of me. "Wouldn't you like to be Rod Serling or Alfred Hitchcock and introduce the programs?" I said, "Not for six weeks." He was kind of quiet, and he said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Do you remember the old 'Thriller'?" He said he did, and I said, "They did an adaptation of the old Robert Howard story 'Pigeons from Hell,' and there's one scene where a guy staggers down the stairs with a hatchet in his head. If you can give me an assurance that I can run a program with the equivalent of a hatchet in the head, we got a deal." There was this long pause, and he said, "Well, we could show him with the hatchet in his chest." And I said, "I just don't believe it." That's where the negotiations on that stood.

As far as the movie goes, I thought Milton Subotsky was a very nice man. In fact, I call him the Hubert Humphrey of horror pictures. He's a consumate Pollyanna, and he wants all his pictures to have an upbeat moralistic ending. It's all right for a guy to get strangled by the snake when it comes out of the basket as long as we see beforehand that he's really a rotten guy and he deserved to go. There has to be this uplifting tone to it. He did hold out this directional thing. It was interesting to me, but I saw real problems in getting along with him and having a working relationship. I'd rather avoid that at the start than get into it and not be able to get back out of it again.

BHOB: You foresaw creative conflicts?

KING: Yes, and in the creative conflicts in this business, sooner or later somebody ends up getting sued or there are hard feelings. The way I feel about Milton right now is quite well: he feels all right toward me, but there is that creative difference of opinion about what horror is supposed to do. So it's better just to avoid the whole thing.

If United Artists came to me and held out three million dollars production money and said, "Will you write and direct *The Dead Zone*?" I would say "Yes," and I would do it. But I don't want to be on view just for the sake of being on view. I don't want to be Charo, and I don't want to be Monte Rock III. If I have to be on view to do my job—that's something different. I've been on tour because it's good for the book to do it. I don't really mind it, but if the situation were different, and I could do it another way, I'd sit home.

BHOB: Would such activities be damaging to your output?

KING: No. I think it would just be a question of rearranging the priorities a little bit. There are people who write novels and still manage to do other things. I don't think it's ever easy. Richard Matheson goes on writing books even though he does screenplays, and William Goldman. It could be arranged.

BHOB: Did you ever see those two TV shows Ray Bradbury hosted last year?

KING: One of the Missing [on PBS], I have that on tape. I think that was wonderful. What was the other one?

BHOB: He did an excellent job conceiving and delivering his own copy on an ABC News Special about future space technology—so good, in fact, that I wondered why the networks haven't used him more often in this capacity. But it seems Bradbury's output as a writer dropped off when he got involved in all these deals and scripts that never took off.

KING: I think you've got it exactly backward. I think Bradbury is involved with the deals and the other stuff because his output as a writer dropped off. He's not doing much fiction anymore. He's writing a little poetry, but really, I think that we've seen all the major Bradbury books we're going to see. I think they're all out.

If PBS came to me and said, "We're going to do a ten week series of famous horror stories. Would you introduce them?" I would do it, because the Nielsen ratings don't affect that sort of thing. If they were very, very good, they might repeat it with a second series, but if they only got two percent of the viewing audience, they wouldn't cancel the series—because they're used to that. I just don't want to put network TV and front my face and my name in front of a bunch of junk.

And I'm not going to do it. ●

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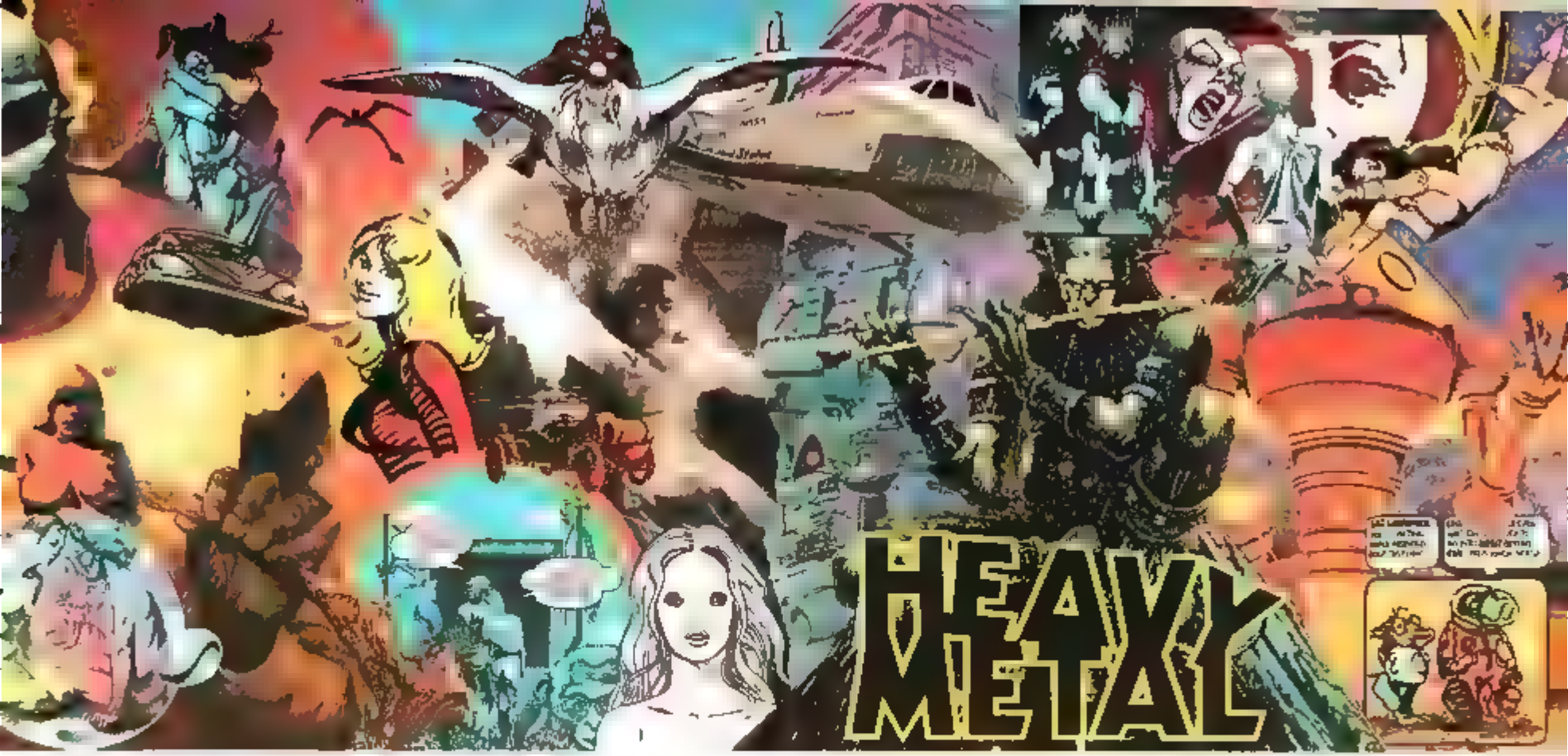

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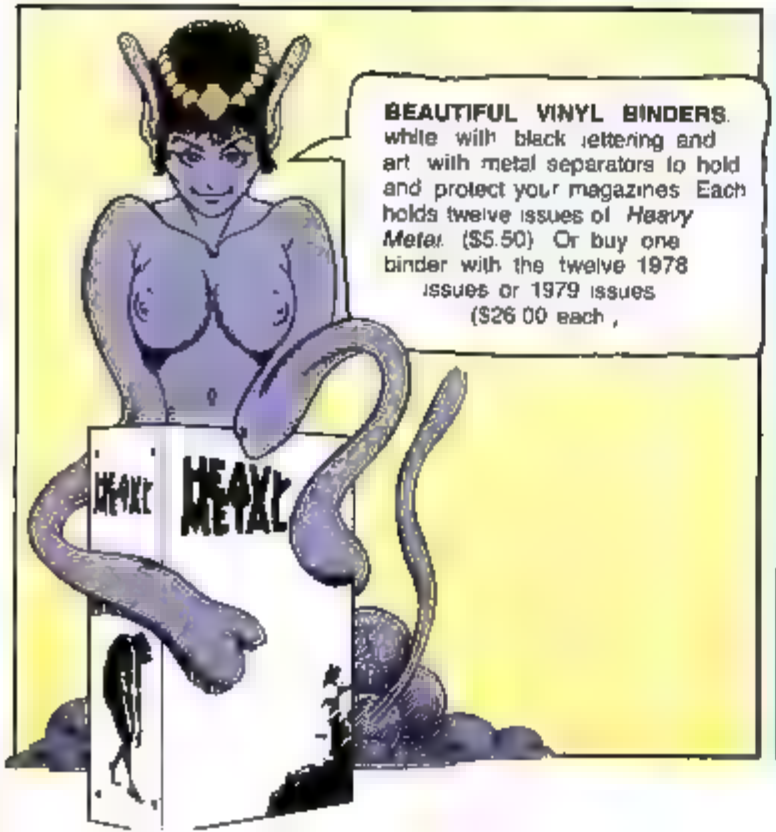
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Welcome to "La Mall"--where anyone,even those without reference or resume,can work--
Drawn by the gleam of silk and thigh,I found myself in the lingerie department at Bloomingdale's
BOO
Scared you,didn't I?
My name's Quintana Roo--I kind of live here.
What here in"La Mall"?
Uh-huh Usually I sleep in the linen department during the daytime

SF by Steve Brown

continued from page 6

scendental Scientism is *the only way*. The TSs have managed to come up with scientific advances about a century ahead of the rest of humanity. They dangle these (immortality, improved star drives, etc.) before potential converts like candy before a child. The basis of TS-ism—and this is where the word "transcendental" comes in—is a vague and undefined philosophy that seems to be less important to the Transcendental Scientists than keeping their scientific toys out of the hands of unbelievers. TS students are indoctrinated (in part chemically and in part by good old fashioned brainwashing) into obedient robots before they are allowed to reap any of the benefits of TS-ism. The Transcendental Scientists came across as petulant children. "You can't play with my toys until you say you think I'm the smartest kid on the block." The TS technologies are constantly given as "too dangerous" to be bestowed upon unenlightened people. Yet nothing is referred to that is much more than a refinement of technologies that the unenlightened have developed on their own, used to settle hundreds of planets, and to create (on Pacifica, at least) a social utopia. The Transcendental Scientists, for all their vaunted new ways of thinking, even admit their own idiocy near the end—something that is apparent to the reader at their first appearance in the story.

The other faction is the Femocrats. It seems that hundreds of years earlier, the women on Earth rose up, threw off the shackles of male domination, and set up an ugly totalitarian regime. The few remaining males are kept in cages as "breeders." None of these jackbooted apparitions act like women (or men, for that matter)—just stereotyped ciphers spouting late sixties feminist rhetoric ("Sisterhood is powerful," etc.). The only Femocrat with a shred of personality is Cynthia Elizabeth, the titular head of the mission. Cynthia has a few superficial second thoughts about the methodology of her sisters (crystallized in an embarrassingly ugly scene wherein she is fucked by a "real man" for the first time), but, such is the depth of characterization in this book, this merely serves to raise Cynthia from the level of a nonentity to that of a boring caricature.

Both the Transcendental Scientists and the Femocrats spend several hundred pages waging a television propaganda campaign of appalling simplemindedness.

For example, these excerpts from a Transcendental Scientist broadcast illustrating the dangers of Femocracy:

> A closeup of a man's wang and balls. A huge knife wielded by a female hand slashes across the frame and severs them from his body. Cut to a medium shot on a woman looking very much like Cynthia Elizabeth as she waves a bloody knife in one hand and the male organs in the other with a demented look of triumph.

Harsh male voice-over: "Don't kid yourselves anymore buckos. *That's* what it's all about — you want to see what they want to turn us into? Have a look at Buckohood, Femocrat style!"

A huge ugly woman leads a man up on the stage by a steel chain attached to a collar around his neck. The man wears a short fluffy blue shirt and pink tights. His hair is dyed a hideous pastel pink and set in piled-high ringlets. He minces across the stage to the uneasy laughter of the crowd. The woman yanks him forward by his leash.

Woman: "Tell them how wonderful it is to be a Femocrat breeder, you ball-less bucko!"

Yes mistress, we *boys* all *love* being Femocrat breeders. Our mistresses take good care of us and give us pretty dresses to wear and we don't have to worry about *anything* — all we have to do is kiss their boots and we *love* licking our mistress's boots clean —and so on, as the gorge rises.

But it gets worse. The Femocrats retort with a campaign that is fully equal to that of the Transcendental Scientists in asininity both in the simplistic rhetoric and the childishly grotesque imagery.

A stock historical shot of ancient Terran Nazis: phalanxes of male troops in black uniforms goose stepping across the screen. A slow dissolve to an exactly similar shot on a Bucko Power demonstration marching to the same beat. Huge surreal wangs sprout from the crotches of the Bucko Power marchers in hideous parody of the Nazi salute, their glans replaced by clenched fists.

Cut to stock footage of a line of ancient tanks lumbering across a blasted landscape. A line of gigantic male figures is superimposed behind them so that the tanks, with their long erect cannons, become their genital organs. As the cannons fire in ragged sequence the male figures arch their backs in ecstasy.

An extreme, ludicrous, clinically unwholesome shot of a disembodied penis pounding in and out of vaginal lips. Intercut with this a series of shots: a sword plunging into a stomach, a fist smashing a face again and again, a close-up of the blazing muzzle of a machine gun, arrows plunging into an animal carcass in rapid-fire sequence. All set up in angle and rhythm to sync into the gross shot of sexual penetration.

The sophisticated media wizards of Pacifica are inexplicably taken in by this kind of idiocy: crap that wouldn't draw more of a reaction than an incredulous titter from a modern ten year old. Yet few of the citizens of Pacifica react to this graffiti-level propaganda with anything more than sheer gullibility. Thus the characters become flimsy caricatures whose feelings and motivations are twisted to fit the author's whims.

The beginning of the book, where Spinrad is setting up the Pacifican media democracy

There was something hypnotic about Quintana's name. Even the mop seemed to whisper
Quintana Roo.
Quintana Roo.
Hey! Are you all right
Roo
Roo .
Aroo?
Quite aroo. Thank you.
I brought you a present
oh thanks, quintana-- where did you get it?
Where do you think? I stole it, of course
Let's check the fountain for coins.

is pretty good. This only reinforces disbelief when we see the entire Pacifican society torn apart by this pink and blue war. Logically both the Femocrats and the Transcendental Scientists would have been laughed off the planet within a page of their arrival, and the book would have ended without a story. As it is, the situation is resolved by vawn true love conquering all, and utopia restored.

There is absolutely no excuse for a book like this, especially from a writer of Spinrad's proven ability. He wrote one of the finest SF novellas I've ever read, *Riding the Torch*—a piece of fiction that is positively Tiptree-esque, for which I have no higher praise. Every character and situation in *A World Between* managed to offend me one way or another, and often on levels on which I hadn't realized I *could* be offended.

But idiocy of plot aside, the book is crammed with sheer bad writing. The prose is superficially slick and riddled with anachronistic idioms (hang loose for sure, do their thing, where you're coming from) that come across in this context like twentieth century people speaking in slang from Arthurian England. Spinrad includes a few future slang words (mostly words for penis, like wongs, whackers, and piercers) that kept my teeth on edge and my hackles up. There are gaping holes in the setting and exposition. Some of the settings, especially the Pacifican cities, are effectively and evocatively described. Yet the local animal life, constantly on stage as pets, metaphors, and general background, isn't described at all. As we know of the three most significant animals in the story is Jelvbe lys are large aquatic, and produce oil boomerbirds fly and sit on water, bumblers have beaks, waddle, and go "whonk." a few. Perhaps the most serious lapse in description is of the entertainments manufactured by the Pacificans, supposedly the basis for their economy. The *only* examples ever mentioned of these are a series of idiotic variations on Japanese Godzilla movies (big lizards stepping on buildings while the populace flees) that are shot on a jungle island inhabited by several varieties of large saurians collectively known—in a burst of authorial ingenuity—as 'godzi las.

For the long-awaited first Spinrad novel in years, *A World Between* is a crushing disappointment that embarrasses the genre as a whole. Had I not felt duty bound to read it to the end for this review, I would have hurled it out the window and gone off to scrub out my cerebral cortex.

Whenever I finish reading something that leaves an odor in my mind as bad as *A World Between*, I spray away the stench with a quick spritz of Theodore Sturgeon.

Sturgeon is one of the few giants of SF. For almost half a century his haunting tales of the interactions of human love have been captivating several generations of readers. Unfortunately many of his hundreds of short stories are languishing unreprinted in moldering SF mags of the 1940s and 50s. Recently Dell Books has unearthed a treasure trove and published it under the title *The*

Stars Are the Srix

The novelette and novella have always been the most difficult length to get reprinted. Editors don't like them because they take up a lot of space and make the contents pages of anthologies look too short. This is a deplorable tendency. The novella and novelette are natural forms for SF, and some of the field's best work has been done in this length.

The Stars Are the Srix is a collection of ten prime Sturgeon novellas: stories that will reach inside and caress your heart. Sturgeon understands love as do few writers in or out of the SF genre. And he is blessed with an unerring eye for detail, and an ear for the conversational nuances.

He writes of love with a perfect blend of passion and compassion.

His characters stand up off the page and breathe and bleed at you.

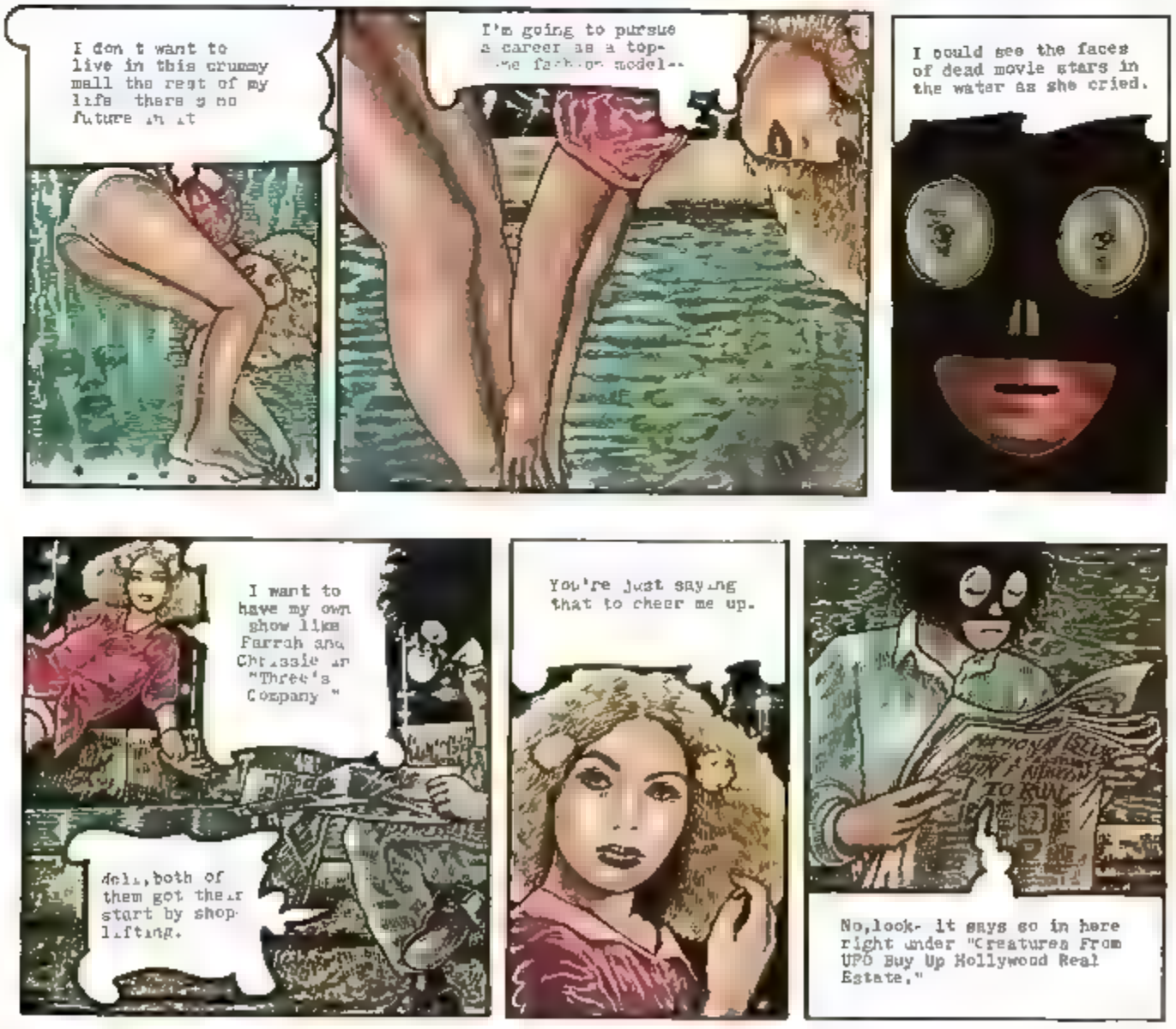
To avoid gushing any further, I won't try to describe any of these marvelous fictions. Suffice to say that the *Stars Are the Srix*, like any random Sturgeon collection, comes with the highest of recommendations.

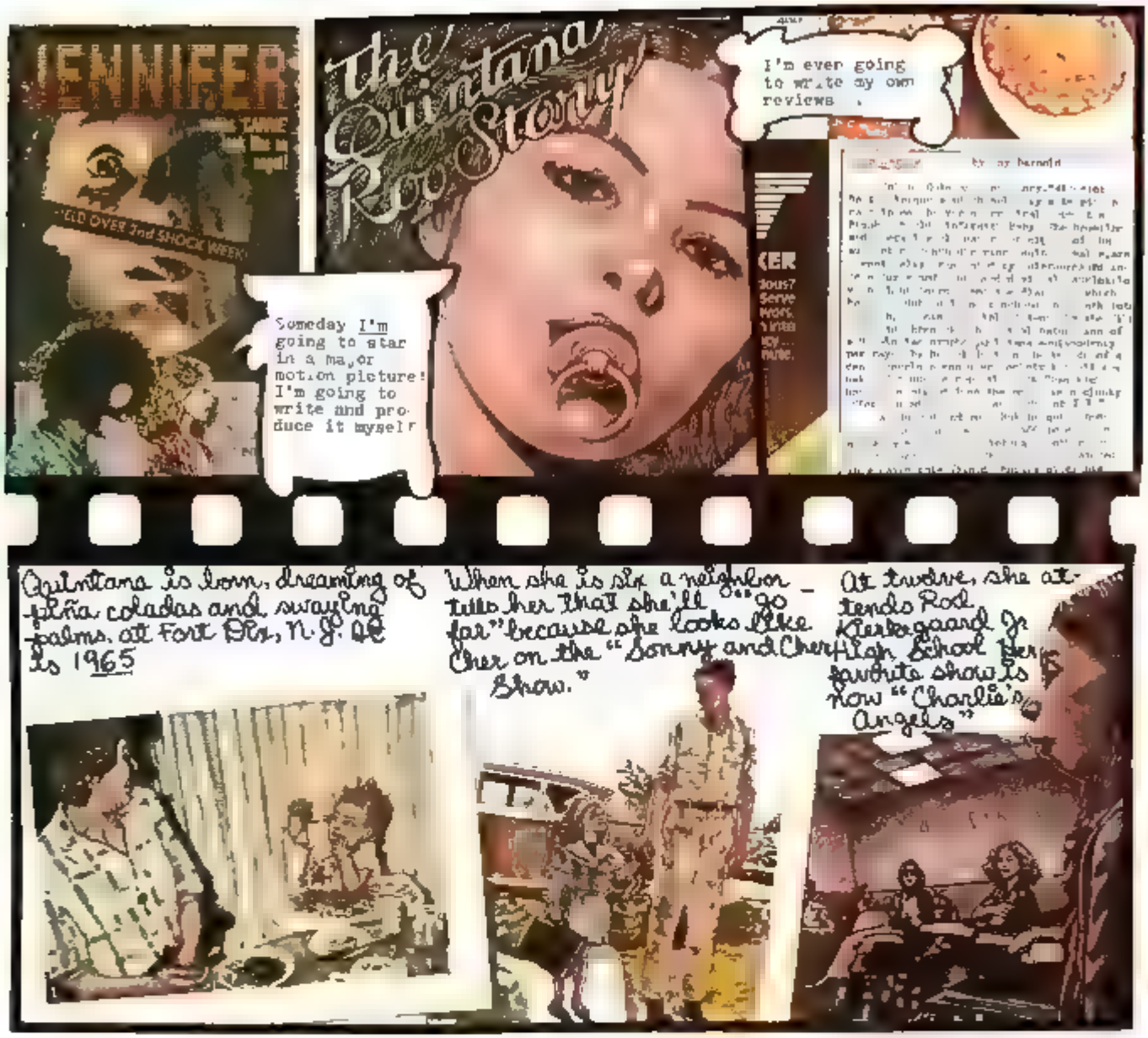
An intriguing thought: I wonder how Sturgeon would have told the story of *A World Between*?

In this age of the megadeal, it is increasingly difficult for a writer to get that first novel into print. Publishers are seduced by the heady power of seven-figure auctions on proven best-sellers with their promise of vast profits and multi-million dollar film sales. Somehow the competent apprentice writer whose first novel won't sell more than a few thousand copies (but who may eventually, with encouragement, write a million-dollar book) gets lost in the shuffle and is left holding an impersonal printed rejection slip. Fortunately the profits in our tiny corner of the fiction industry are counted in consistent sales by a large list of writers. There have been few auction sales. Only in SF does the beginning writer of today stand much of a chance in selling that flawed first novel: the one where he will make mistakes that will teach him how to write a much better one the next time.

Such a book is *Sundiver*. David Brin's first novel. Brin has a fertile and well-developed imagination. This coupled with a sinuous and rapid paced style, make him an enjoyable author to read and one to watch out for.

The middle distant future Earth envisioned in *Sundiver* is a world that has been contacted by representatives of a galactic confederacy involving thousands of different races. The story is an elaborately plotted murder-cum-espionage thriller. The *Sundiver* of the title is a ship able to carry passengers onto (or more accurately partially into) the surface of the sun. When signs of life (particularly a kind of grazing animal formed of static energy structures charmingly known as "magnetovores") are detected on the sun, an expedition is mounted containing a few humans and observers from several important alien races, all of whom have various blatant or disguised motives for either helping or hindering the


I don't want to live in this crummy mall the rest of my life. There's no future in it.
I'm going to pursue a career as a top-line fashion model--
I could see the faces of dead movie stars in the water as she cried.
I want to have my own show like Farrah and Christie in "Three's Company."
dolls, both of them got their start by shoplifting.
You're just saying that to cheer me up.
NATIONAL ENQUIRER
No, look- it says so in here right under "Creatures From UFO Buy Up Hollywood Real Estate."


JENNIFER
the Quintana Roo Story
Someday I'm going to star in a major motion picture! I'm going to write and produce it myself
I'm ever going to write my own reviews
Quintana is born, dreaming of Piña coladas and swaying palms, at Fort Dix, N.J. AC In 1965
When she is six a neighbor tells her that she'll "go far" because she looks like Cher on the "Sonny and Cher Show."
At twelve, she attends Rod Kierkegaard Jr High School. Her favorite show is now "Charlie's Angels"

expectation. The descents into the sun are superbly handled and manage to convey the breathtaking majesty of such an experience. The technical aspects of the book are thoroughly researched and accurate sounding without being unduly obtrusive. The prose is fast paced and voraciously readable throughout—particularly during the lengthy climactic scene involving an onboard battle on a ship trapped inside the most stunningly beautiful of hells.

But as entertaining as the book is, I had quite a few problems with it. Most of them involve a pernicious form of first novelitis I call the kitchen sink syndrome. Brin has cluttered his narrative with dozens of red herrings and extraneous bits of business. During the time we should have spent learning about the personalities and motivations of the characters, we are left to puzzle over a bewildering variety of added to past events with no bearing on the story and to follow plot threads that are suddenly chopped off and turn out to be irrelevant.

The kitchen sink syndrome is a narrative cancer that can eat the heart out of a book. So much time is spent juggling an increasingly unwieldy plot that the author is forced to cheat. Several times Brin has the protagonist learn something that is not imparted to the reader until much later. To hypothesize an example of my own: Hank opened the box and looked inside. What he saw there changed everything. He knew now why Ameena had painted the birdcage fluorescent orange and the true significance of the rooster. He immediately began to [illegible]. But the *reader* doesn't learn what is in that box for another fifty pages. This saps the protagonist of believability by obscuring his motivations and ultimately takes the reader out of the role of participant and into that of bored observer.

Another fatal side effect of the kitchen sink syndrome is the lack of attention devoted to motive and emotion. So much time is spent skipping from one inconsequential event to another that the personalities of the characters never become more than ciphers. In particular the omnipresent aliens in *Sundiver*—for all their cleverly envisioned physical structures — never come across as more than somewhat stupid humans in funny costumes. The resolution of Brin's novel finally depends on the motivations of the aliens with millennia of culture evolution behind them) that are little more than petulant elementary school playground dynamics. The most infuriating aspect of the top-heavy plot is the necessity of spending thirty or forty pages after the quite gripping climax watching the characters sitting around explaining what had happened to each other.

There is a philosophical attitude in *Sundiver* I find repugnant and see as the root cause of the unbelievable characterizations of the aliens. Galactic civilization is set up on strictly hierarchical lines. Whenever a planet containing a species with the potential for intelligence is discovered, it immediately be-

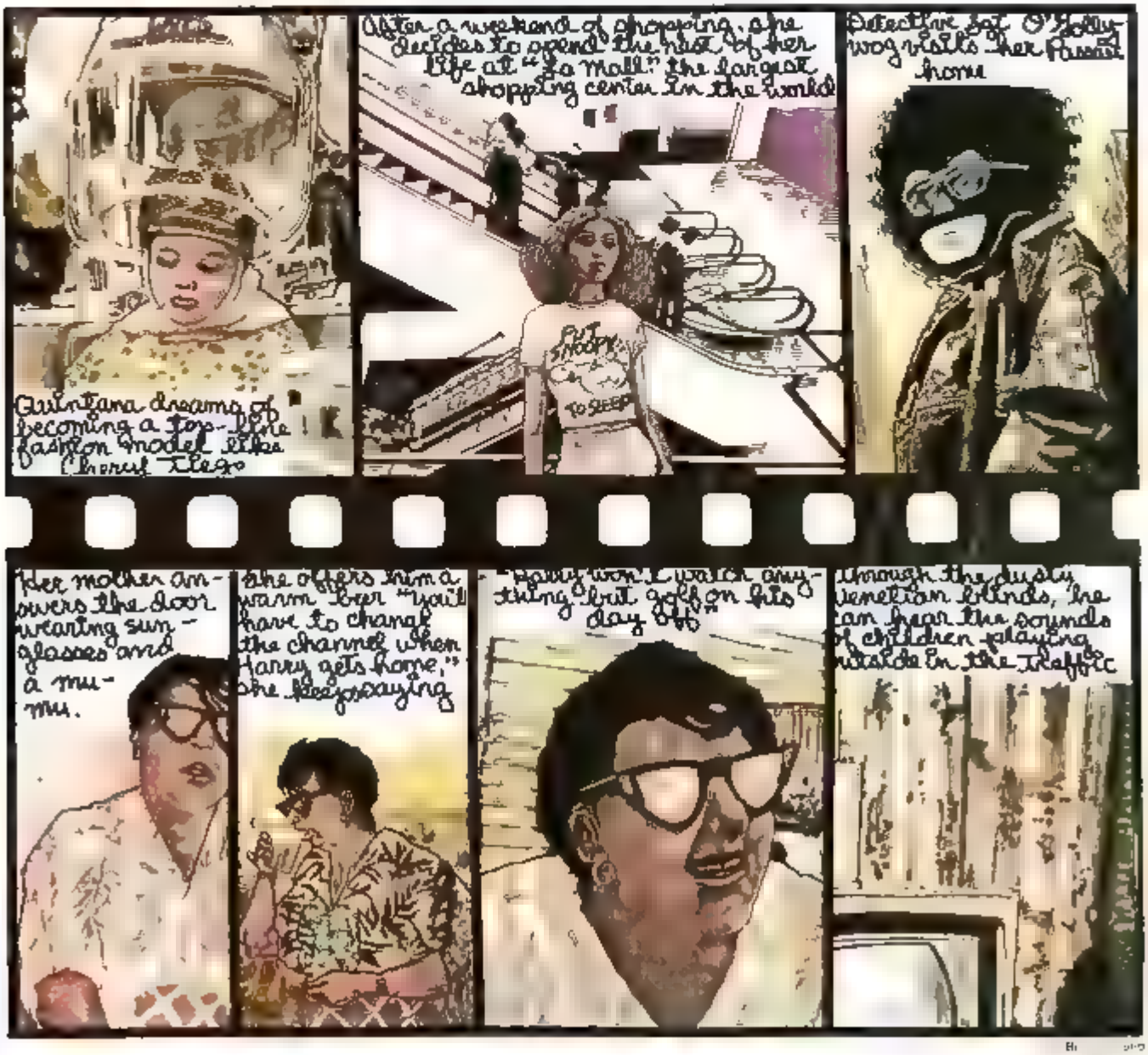
comes a client species to a developed space faring race. The species is then ramrodded into full intelligence using everything from genetic manipulation to forced access to the Library, a compendium of all galactic knowledge. This raises some disturbing questions. Apparently no race in the galaxy has achieved sentience and sophisticated technology without the help of an older race with the exceptions of the legendary Progenitors and the very infrequent rogue races whose sponsors abandoned them early on in the educative process, such as us. This kind of rampant Von Danikenism, with its attendant deliberate stifling of free will, is to me a simplistic and repellent concept. For one reason, I don't believe in this kind of inexplicable and senseless waste of time and resources among thousands of races who seem to be spending most of the galactic national product in making each other as exactly alike as possible. If contemplation of nature has taught us nothing else, it has taught us that diversity, both in thought and appearance, is the rule rather than the exception. For another, and more important reason, it demonstrates a single-minded totalitarianism and callous disregard for the individual that would like to think is more representative of a race in its infancy than in a stable culture whose history spans millions of years. On the book, after a race is brought up to technological snuff, they remain in involuntary servitude to the parent race for millennia.

Why is the human race always presented as unique, either in ability— "We are destined to rule the galaxy"—or in thought? Only we humans have the capability of coming up with fresh ideas and useful innovations." This has always seemed to me to be the height of species chauvinism. It's an attitude that could get us into a lot of trouble when we finally *do* meet Them.

David Brin will be a very good writer in time. He has the imaginative and narrative tools at his disposal. If he can sit down and explore the scenery inside his characters' heads with the insight and detail he uses for the external events, and learn to cut his plotting to the bone, he will begin to write books that will garner him many awards and much public attention and create thousands of satisfied readers.

I believe that *Sundiver* SF content aside, couldn't have been published in any other field of literature today, but that it should have been. It's a sign of the vitality of SF and the willingness of its editors to take chances that such a book can get published. Now that he has an idea of what it takes to write a novel, I can't wait to read his next one.

A World Between, by Norman Spinrad. Pocket Books, October 1979, $2.25.
The Stars Are the Stage, by Theodore Sturgeon. Dell, October 1979, $2.25.
Sundiver, by David Brin. Bantam, February 1980, $1.95. ●


Quintana dreams of becoming a top-line fashion model like Cheryl Tiegs
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Detective Sgt. O'Reilly wog visits her parents' home
her mother answers the door wearing sun-glasses and a mu-mu.
she offers him a warm beer "you'll have to change the channel when Harry gets home," she keeps saying
"Sorry, won't watch anything that goes on his day off"
through the dusty venetian blinds, he can hear the sounds of children playing outside on the traffic

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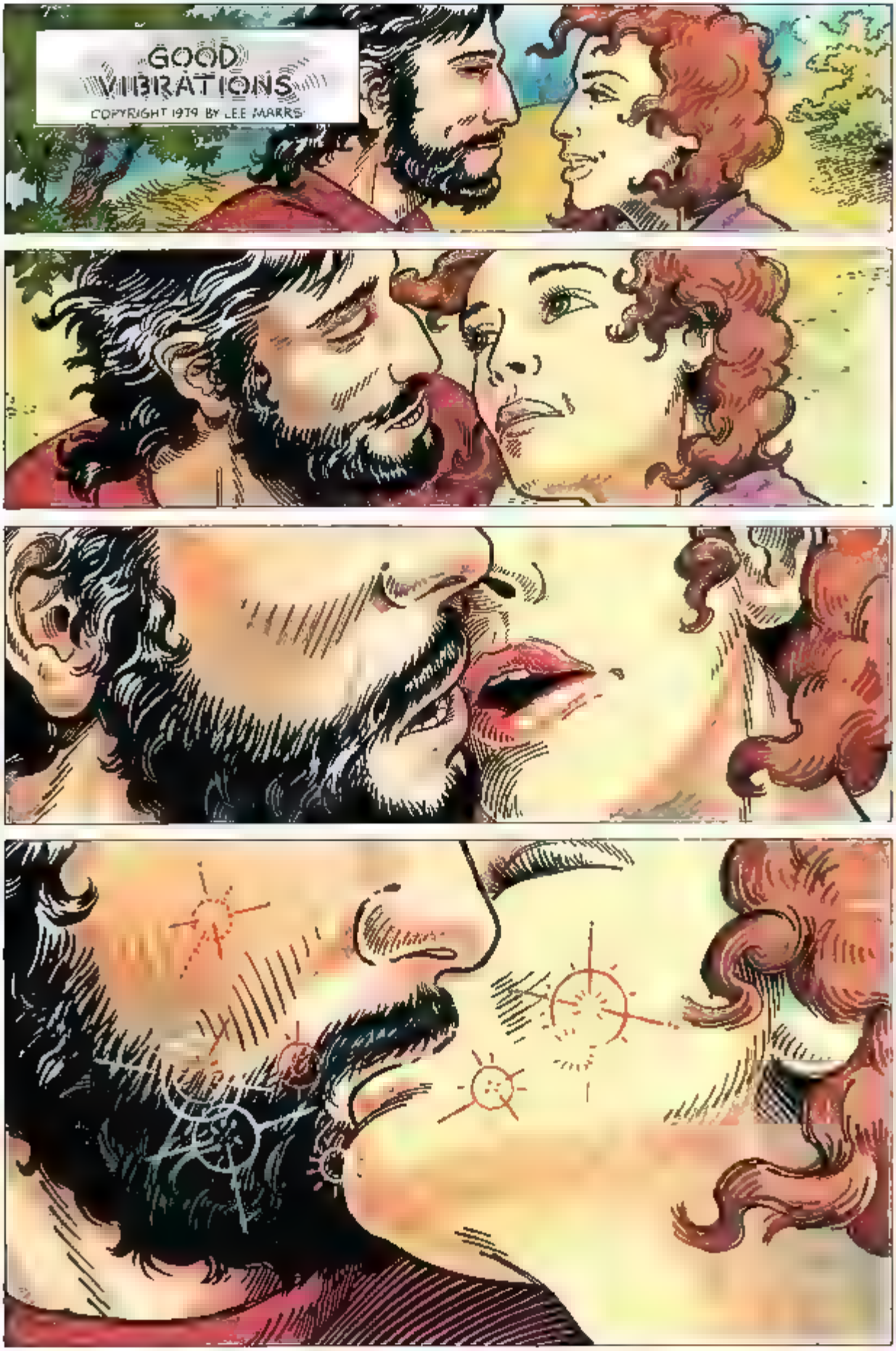
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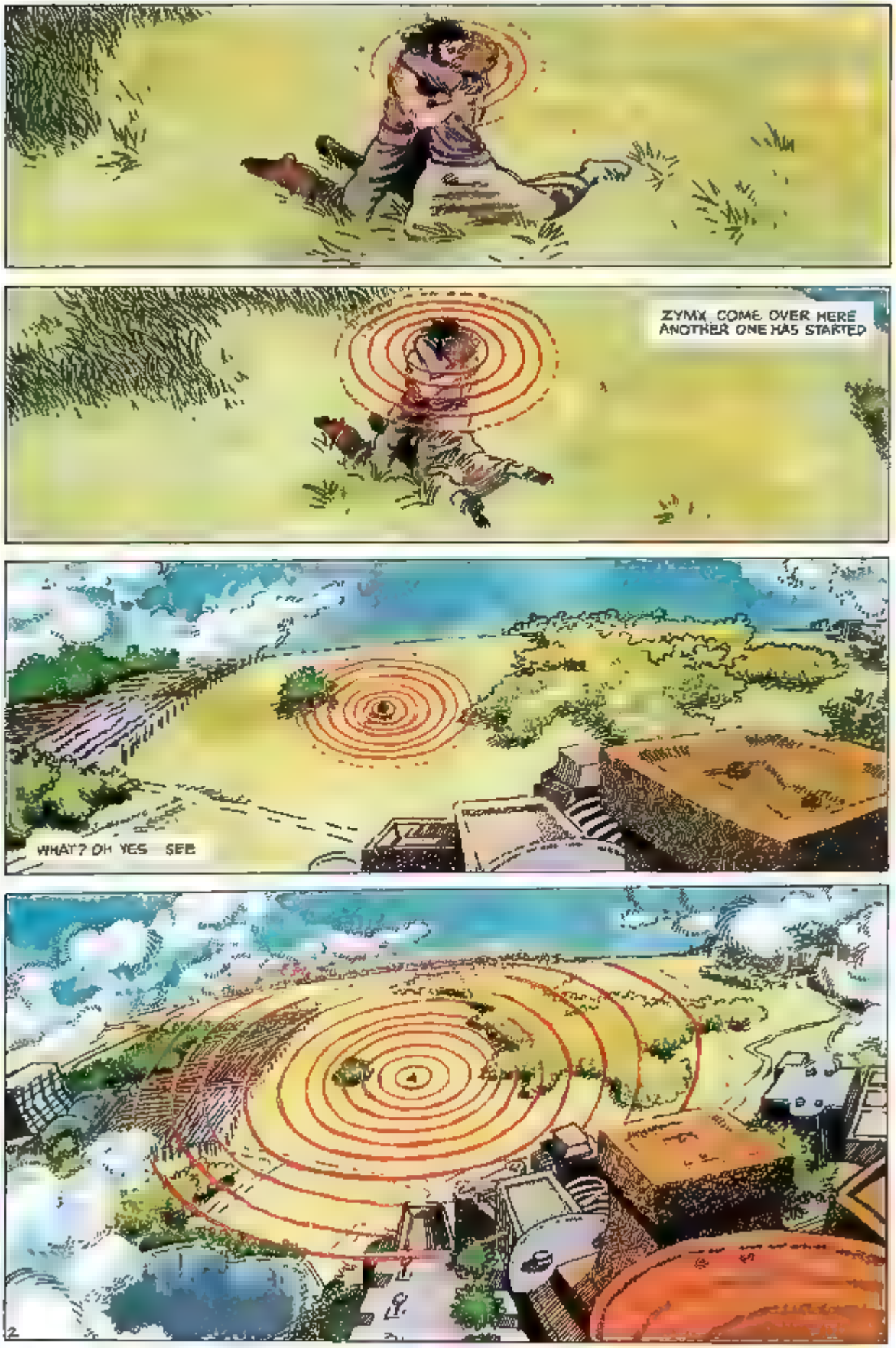
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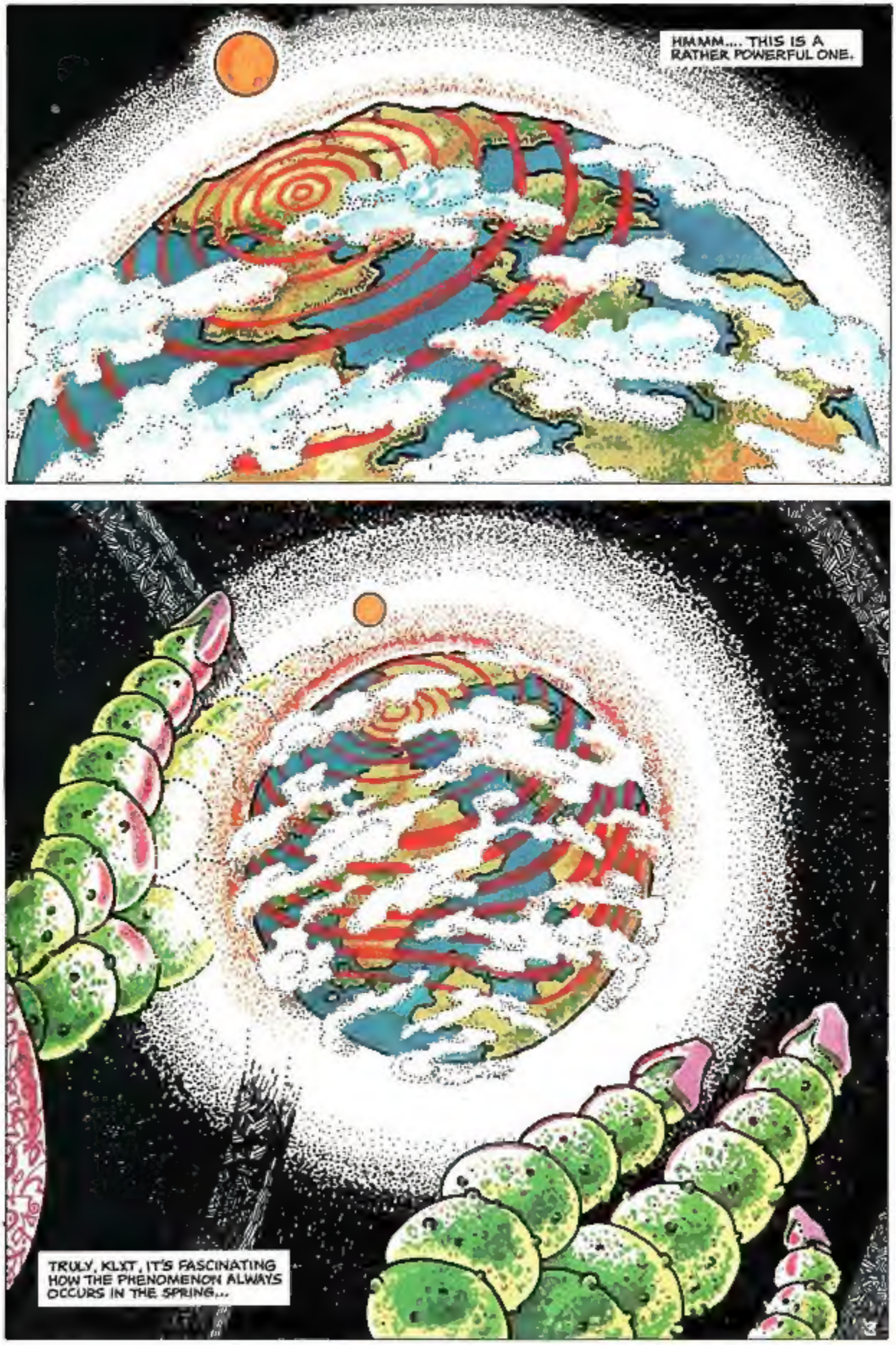
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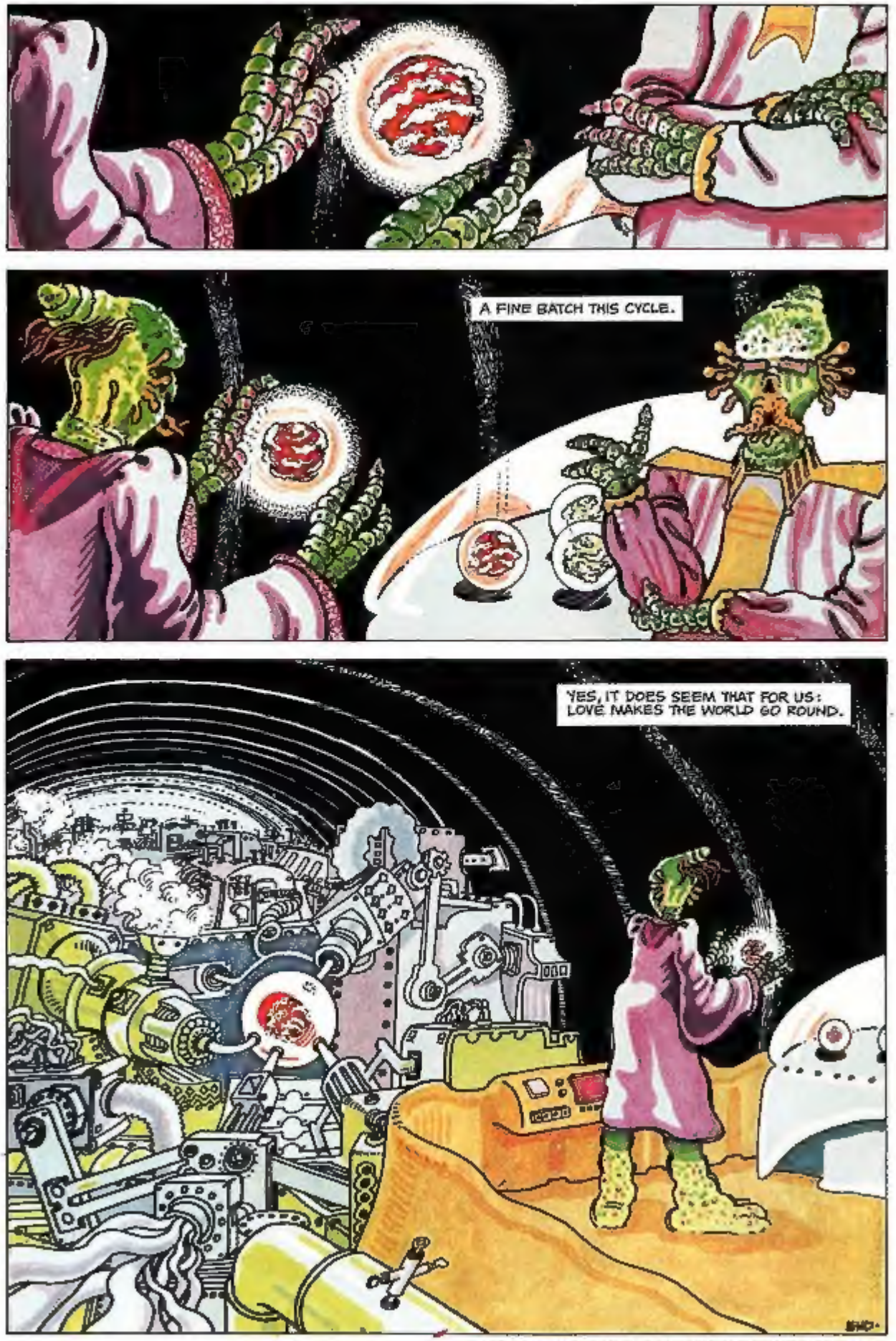

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